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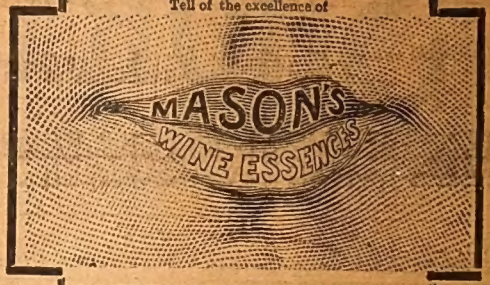

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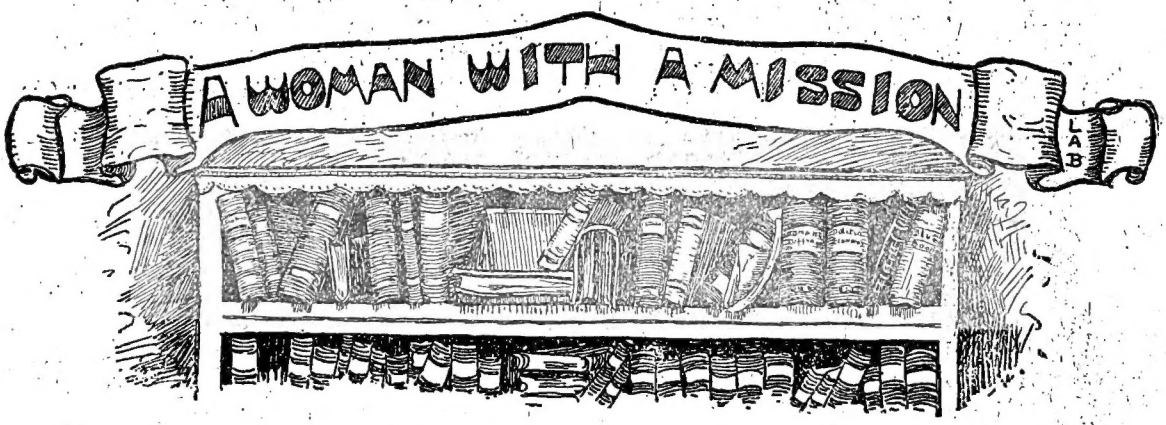

"My dear Cecil, the boy's simply infatuated. Won't listen to a word, but flies into a temper if I so much as hint that Lois Richards does not exactly come up to my ideal of a daughter-in-law. Imagine, Cecil, she's thirty-three if she's a day, rather plain, and, above all things—strong-minded! It's so odd what Eugene can see in her, I always understood men liked soft womanly women, but nowadays everything seems turned upside down."

"But, my dear Helen, things might be worse," returned her companion, a distinguished-looking man of about forty-five. "Miss Richards might be a ballet dancer with an affection for porter, and a dislike to 'aitches.' I don't gather that she is either uneducated or without refinement."

"I'd far rather she was a ballet girl," retorted Lady Hilliers, "her vulgarities might in that case be softened into eccentricities; but what, I ask you, Cecil, can one hope for in a woman with a mission?"

"Aborigines?"—questioned Lord Merton.

"A great deal worse. Aborigines always have a certain vogue—the same as Charity Bazaars. No, my dear Cecil, Miss Richards goes in for Women's Rights, and the emancipation of her sex generally."

"How does she propose to set about it?" asked Lord Merton, slightly curious.

"I haven't troubled about that," said Lady Hilliers hopelessly, "it's quite enough for me, that she wishes to. She has a flat just above Eugene's studio, and, when not engaged in missionising she calls in—so Eugene says—to paint. Anything more unconventional, improper even, I cannot imagine."

"Have you been to see her, Helen?"

"I? Good gracious, Cecil! Of what are you thinking? How could I call on a woman who, who—well, to say the least of it—is most peculiar?"

Lord Merton looked sharply at the fashionable beauty sitting opposite. There was a gleam of humour in his eyes, and his lips twitched under the thick moustache, but when she raised her face, and shot at him a most reproachful glance his heart smote him, and the humour gave way to a kindly smile that was infinitely reassuring.

"If there's anything I can do, Helen?" he began.

Lady Hillier's face cleared.

"You can do everything," she said. "You know, Cecil," she went on, "how much my boy is to me, and the idea of his marrying this—woman, is like a nightmare. But Eugene is so high spirited he will not brook a word, from me, and indeed I could not run the risk of even a temporary estrangement from him. And so, Cecil, all my hopes are fixed on you."

"I'm afraid, I haven't much influence with Eugene, Helen."

"I don't mean with regard to Eugene, but the woman."

"I don't quite understand you. Am I to offer Miss Richards a handsome balance at her bankers if she will relinquish Eugene, or to build a Mission Hall where she can hold forth—or—in short, my dear, what am I to offer?"

"Yourself."

"That," said Lord Merton with a laugh, "is the one thing I cannot give you. Seriously, Helen, what do you mean? Even to oblige you I really cannot marry a woman with a mission."

"No," said her ladyship sweetly, "but you can make her think you want to. Indeed, Cecil," she added, laying her hand upon his arm, "I am not asking you to do anything dishonourable, this Lois Richards can have no true womanly feeling about her—she doesn't really care for Eugene, otherwise she would not stand in his light. Title and position are all she thinks of, and if my boy sees that, he will be cured of this mad infatuation immediately. All I ask you is to make believe—not a difficult matter for you, Cecil, where a woman is concerned."

"It's not exactly what you women call nice," he said.

"But you will do it, Cecil, because I ask you."

And because she asked him, she, the woman who had held his heart in the days when he was but a penniless subaltern with nothing but his handsome face and silvery tongue to recommend him—because she asked him, he consented.

Lady Helen smiled as the door shut behind Lord Merton, and her face flushed at the remembrance of his words. She was positive he loved her and yet she was somewhat puzzled as to why he had not yet made a formal declaration. Years ago it had been so different. It was not to be supposed that she could marry a man with neither position or prospects. Who was to know that he would drop into the title? But then again who was to know that the impetuous, passionate lover of the long ago, would have developed into the always charming, but slightly cynical man of the world? She sighed impatiently. She had been a widow now for fifteen years, and all the time, Cecil had been her loyal and faithful friend—but her lover never for a moment.

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It didn't look exactly like the sort of place a woman with a mission would select for a habitation. Certainly not in Lord Merton's eyes. He had vaguely expected a chilly not to say forbidding apartment, furnished on the principle of the greatest convenience in the least possible space. He had looked to find piles of flannel garments mixed up with blue books and statistics, he was prepared for a hideous wall paper and a glaring carpet.

But this, he reflected, was distinctly not the room of a strong-minded woman, at least—he corrected himself hastily, an unpleasantly strong-minded woman.

The walls were hung with pale yellow draperies, and curtains of the same hue shaded the windows. The whole room was a study in yellow, even to the tall, slim, vases of venetian glass filled with mimosa and stately daffodils.

"She must be daring to risk so much yellow," thought Lord Merton, "if she's as plain as Helen says."

And then, the door opened and Lois Richards, "thirty three if she's a day, plain and painfully strong-minded," entered.

'Twas not without good reason Lady Helen had so described poor Lois.

The fashionable Society woman understood that the majority of people accept a third person's estimate of anything—be it a book, a play a beauty or a reputation, rather than think for themselves. But for once she might have spared her pains, for, by one of those unaccountable freaks to which all men are subject, no sooner had Lois Richards smiled and given him her hand, than Lord Merton forgot all he had been told about her and came to the conclusion she was charming.

Somehow the ostensible reason for his call—business in connection with some "Society" to which Lois belonged seemed to have grown curiously inadequate. He found himself stumbling over facts and figures in a way quite unlike his usual *sang froid*, and more than once caught a gleam of amusement in his hostess's eyes, when he made some peculiarly foolish error.

He felt himself on the brink of being discovered. A few pertinent questions had already shown Lois his ignorance of the "cause" which he professed to champion, and with the knowledge had come the remembrance that Lord Merton was a special friend of Lady Hillier, and as such must be inimical to her. Her face clouded, and turning to his lordship she was about to catechise him as to his *bona fides*, when the situation was saved by the arrival of Sir Eugene.

"Lois," he cried, rushing in impetuously. "I want your opinion at once. I can't get on with that picture till you've seen it. Come down to the studio, there's a good girl."

"Why, Merton," he exclaimed, suddenly perceiving his lordship, and then broke off, fixing his eyes upon the unfortunate nobleman's face in a stare the reverse of polite.

"Lord Merton came to see me in reference to a society I'm connected with," said Lois gravely. "Supposing we all come and look at the picture, Eugene?"

The next half hour was one of the most uncomfortable that Lord Merton had ever experienced. More than once he wished devoutly that he had disregarded Lady Helen's plea, though at the same time he was conscious of feeling very pleased that he had seen Lois Richards. Truly, hers was a face that repaid one for study; a fair, creamy skin through which the warm blood flushed whenever she was stirred by a tale of suffering or sorrow. Large, somewhat mournful looking eyes, shaded by lashes black as night. What on earth did Helen mean by calling her plain?

Helen would have pointed out that Lois could not lay claim to a small mouth, or a classical nose, also that if her hands were white and beautifully formed they might possibly be considered large! And how could a woman with a large mouth, big hands, and a bad nose be otherwise than plain.

What a sweet smile she had, he thought, and what a lucky dog was Eugene, to see and speak to her whenever he so felt inclined. For the first time Cecil Merton did not feel altogether cordial towards his young friend. The conviction that if Eugene were handsome he was insufferably conceited stole upon him, and when with a defiant look in his direction, the young fellow called Miss Richards "dear," his lordship felt that it was time to go. He left accordingly in a frame of mind the reverse of friendly towards Eugene, and with his heart strangely stirred by thoughts of Lois.

"How long is this to go on, Lois?" exclaimed the artist when at last they were alone. "For how long, I say, am I to be denied the

Lord Merton looked sharply at the fashionable beauty sitting opposite.

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right of shielding you from insult, protecting you from all annoyances? It isn't fair to me, dear. Why am I not to put it out of the power of meddlesome fools to annoy you? Do you suppose I don't know why Lord Merton came here, Lois? He was sent to see you by my mother, that he might add his impertinent remarks to the list of imperfections which she has compiled concerning you."

"I don't think that," said Lois.

Somehow the thought that Lord Merton had called with the express intention of putting her "under the microscope" was not exactly pleasing. He had such a clever—such an attractive face, surely he could not be so utterly mean as Eugene said.

The young fellow glanced at her moodily.

"Lord Merton, after all, is beside the question," he said, "he is only one of a host of curious, ill-bred people who seem to delight in annoying their superiors. What I want to know is, when I am to have the right of answering them?"

As he stood leaning against his easel, his fair boyish face flushed with anxiety, the charming if somewhat querulous mouth tightly set, Lois felt a pang of remorse that she could not respond to his appeal. She comprehended in a flash the disposition of the man who so earnestly implored her love. Gracious, winning, possessed of exuberant spirits, he was an ideal companion for a sunny day. But life, alas! was not one long spring morning, and the pliant nature of Eugene would not, she knew, flourish in the storm and stress of untoward circumstances.

Lord Merton strong, capable, self-controlled, self-contained—what a contrast to Eugene! She flushed, and wondered why she should have thought of him.

"Eugene," she said at last, "you speak as though there had been a promise on my part. If you remember, dear, I distinctly made it a condition of our friendship that you should not refer to the conversation which we had six months ago—when you asked me to be your wife."

"I remember only too well," he answered bitterly, "but a man must needs be made of stone, to see you, to drink in your beauty day by day, and not desire to hold you as his own against the world. I love you, Lois, utterly, intensely, and I can't help always doing so. Won't you have pity on me, darling, and give me just a little hope?"

He had taken her hands in his, and stood, gazing into her eyes, unutterable tenderness in his. What wonder that poor Lois, tired with her struggle for independence, dispirited with the sneers which greeted her, what wonder that she wavered for a moment? After all, it was but little good she did, her income was too small to admit of much; surely it would be better to leave it all behind, this life of hard endeavour with but small result.

"Lois," his arm stole gently round her waist. "Lois."

The door opened and Lois Richards entered.

"No, no," she cried, "a thousand times, it would mean life long misery for both; I cannot marry you, Eugene, because I do not love you."

Poor Eugene felt utterly crushed, but such was the intensity of his love that he would not accept the refusal.

And though it wrung her heart to see the utter desolation and despair with which he heard her answer, though for the next half-hour she suffered agonies, the while he raved, implored, prayed for her love with shaking hands, and tear-dimmed eyes, yet when it was over and she was left alone—how much alone she realised for the first time, she was thankful that she had not yielded, had not purchased lasting sorrow, and regret, for the sake of present sympathy and consolation.

As to Eugene, when he found that his appeals and ravings were all in vain and that Lois could not be moved, he went out feeling that life had lost all its poetry.

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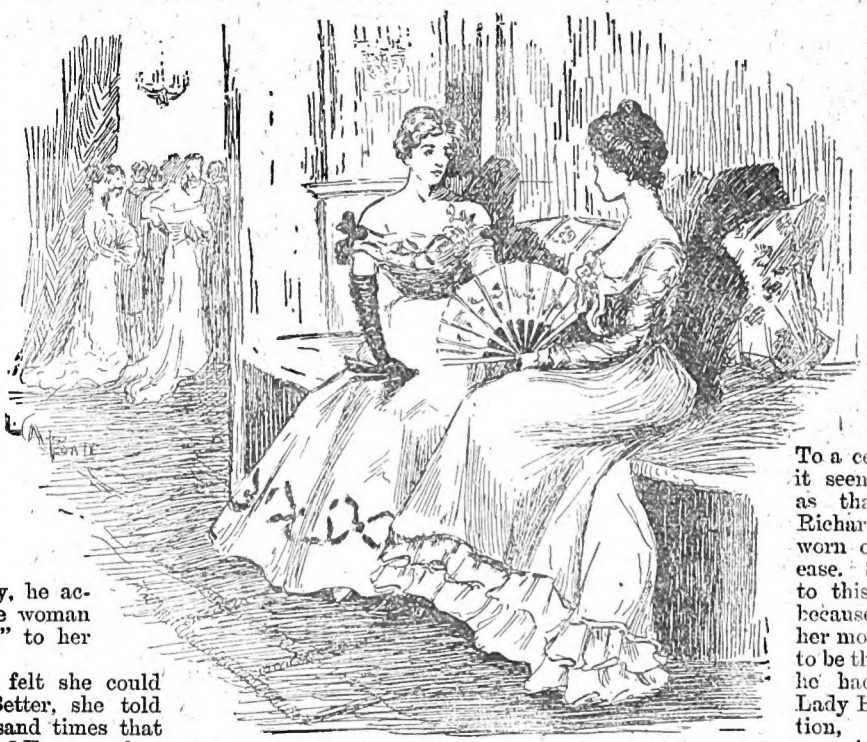
It was the fag end of the London season, and only those unfortunate persons who could not by any stretch of the imagination lay claim to that mysterious title "smart," were content to remain in town. Lady Hilliers had been due at a country house some ten days ago, and why she should linger was a mystery.

Things had not turned out quite as she had wished over *l'affaire Richards*, as she contemptuously styled it. True, Eugene had ceased to speak of, or to call upon the obnoxious person in question, but then it was almost as annoying that at the height of a most successful season he should have announced his intention of shooting big game, and started forthwith for Africa.

There was another and still more potent reason—albeit unacknowledged—for her ladyship's dissatisfaction. Lord Merton had not been so frequently of late, moreover when she laughingly asked how "his flirtation with the fair Lois was progressing," she had met with a rebuff none the less decided because perfectly courteous. Rumours had reached her that Cecil was a constant visitor at the flat, and that not infrequently, he accompanied "the woman with a mission," to her meetings.



Lois found herself listening to Lady Helen's history of Lord Merton.

Lady Helen felt she could not bear it. Better, she told herself, a thousand times that Lois had married Eugene, than that she should win from her the man she loved! And so it came to pass that she waited, day after day, hoping and yet fearing he would call.

She was out of sorts, she decided; London was unbearable in August, she had been mad to stay. The prospect of an evening alone with her thoughts, was more than she could face, and for a moment she contemplated starting for the country then and there. Turning over the contents of her writing table she came across an "At Home" card for that very evening. She remembered with a curious little pang, that she had shown it to Cecil, and they had laughed together at the elaborate design with which it was ornamented. As a rule Lady Helen would not have ventured within a mile of Mrs. Ponsonby-Vane's drawing room, but as it was she hailed the prospect of that worthy lady's entertainment with positive satisfaction.

Mrs. Ponsonby-Vane herself was rendered almost speechless with delight at the sight of her ladyship, whose title and position she retailed—it seemed to Lady Helen at least twenty times.

But amusing at first, after a while the good lady became burdensome, and Lady Helen was thinking of effecting an escape, when with an air of infinite contentment on his handsome features she encountered Cecil Merton.

"Why, Helen, what brought you here?"

"Since when," she answered, smiling, "has Mrs. Ponsonby-Vane taken my place in your esteem. It's a month, Cecil, since you came, and here I find you amidst a host of Goths and Vandals."

"I thought you had left town long ago," he said, "or you know I should have been round to see you. You don't look well, Helen. What's been the matter?"

She was undoubtedly a lovely woman, and her face touched into softness by her love looked infinitely attractive. Surely they might have been taken for lovers, as he bent over her with that air of complete forgetfulness of aught beside, so flattering to a woman. To a certain onlooker it seemed as certain, as that she, Lois Richards, felt tired, worn out, and ill at ease. She had come to this "At Home" because Cecil asked her most particularly to be there. Perhaps he had done so at Lady Helen's instigation, thinking to wound, to humiliate her. Then softer thoughts prevailed, and it was her own sweet self that answered, then not a little to that lady's chagrin, Cecil fetched her to Lady Helen's side.

A few words of conventional greeting, and then without knowing how it was managed, Lois found herself listening to, and believing Lady Helen's history of Lord Merton. Cecil had left the two women together, and, gathering all her forces for the fray, his quondam love opened the attack.

"Lord Merton's very charming, don't you think, Miss—er—Richards? I dare say you've wondered why he never married. It does seem a pity, doesn't it? But you see I was so very young and he was so heavily in debt, poor fellow, that it would have meant ruin to have accepted him. I'm forgetting," she added sweetly, "of course you don't know. To make a long story short, dear Miss Richards, fate parted us when we were very young—that was the first volume of our romance. Then,

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my duty towards my boy, my dear Eugene, stepped in the way of happiness and that," with a sigh, "was the second. But the third is always the best, isn't it? and I think that very soon the novel will be completed, in the orthodox fashion. I'm really so delighted to have met you," she went on, "my son often talked to me about you."

In a choked voice Lois asked after Eugene. He, she thought bitterly, had acted very differently to Cecil.

"Very well, thank you," cooed her tormentor. "It was so sensible of you, dear Miss Richards, to understand how impossible a marriage would have been between you. At one time, when of course"— laying her hand caressingly upon Lois's shoulder—"I did not know you, I contemplated asking Lord Cecil to intervene. It was very wicked of me, but I even suggested he should make love to you in rivalry with Eugene.

"Are you going? Well I'm very pleased to have met you, we must see more of each other, when—when the third volume is complete."

"Miss Richards, Cecil? Oh, she felt tired and went home. I don't wonder I'm sure, Mrs. Ponsonby-Vane is enough to tire a cast iron constitution. Let's get away before she sees us."

Never had Lord Cecil been more tender, more charming in his manner, and Lady Helen's hopes were high when he said "farewell,"

"I have something to tell you, Helen," he said. "Something which closely affects my happiness. We have been good friends, you and I, that I must tell you before anyone. I'll come to-morrow afternoon."

But for all that they were "such good friends" poor Lady Helen never came within a mile of guessing what he had to say.

* * * * *

It was very pleasant in Lois' little sitting room, however hot and dry without, it never seemed to be otherwise than cool and refreshing. Perhaps it was associated in an indefinite sort of way with Lois herself, for those who knew her well were wont to say she had an infinitely "restful" influence on those about her.

Lord Merton felt strangely thrilled, as the slim, white-gowned figure, came to meet him, and his pulses beat quickly as he took her hand.

"Tired?" he said in that caressing voice of his. "Was Mrs. Ponsonby-Vane too much for you, Lois, or have you been working too hard?"

"I wish," she said with a touch of temper quite unlike her usual serenity, "that you would not use my name in so unceremonious a fashion. I don't like it, Lord Merton."

It was seldom that his lordship showed surprise, but on this occasion he felt too astonished to conceal it.

"What have I done?" he stammered; "what has changed you so?"

"I am not changed," she answered, "I have not purported to be a friend to anyone, and all the time laughed in my sleeve at their simplicity. Surely," she added passionately, "you might have had the grace to drop your mask when you discovered that I did not mean to marry Eugene. After you learnt that there was not, or never could be any bond between us, what shadow of excuse remained to justify your conduct? Had you discovered I was mercenary, and desired money, and title, then, I say, then, your part would have been despicable. But when you found that I was not what others painted me, still you continued, and professing friendship held me up to ridicule for the amusement of the woman who had bade you 'make believe.'"

"Who told you this?"

"What does it matter, since I know?"

"You don't know all, I swear you only know the half, and that the baser half. Lois, yes, I will call you Lois, my Lois, you shall hear me. Years back I loved her, Helen Vincent, with all the mad enthusiasm of a romantic boy, but she was too sensible to let passion play havoc with her life, and so she married Hilliers, the banker. Since she lost her husband we have been friends—no more, save that my friendship was coloured somewhat by the past. She told me of her son's infatuation, begged me to help her, and in an idle moment, not knowing who, or what you were, I yielded. I came prepared to flirt—if you will—to 'make believe' I loved you, but from the first, I saw, on my part it would be reality. I confess it was a mean, ignoble thing to do, but Nemesis has swiftly overtaken me. Lois, have I sinned past all forgiveness?"

"And you're not going to marry Lady Helen?"

"I am going to marry you," he answered gravely.

"Oh, Cecil," she said, her voice breaking, "think well before you ask, for I don't think I have courage to refuse you."

* * * * *

Lady Hilliers says "poor Cecil" is ruined by his marriage, and occasionally hints that had she chosen things would have turned out very differently.

But Lord Merton is quite satisfied, for Lois is even more devoted to her husband than her "mission," indeed she doesn't trouble quite so much about the latter nowadays.

A. E. JONES.

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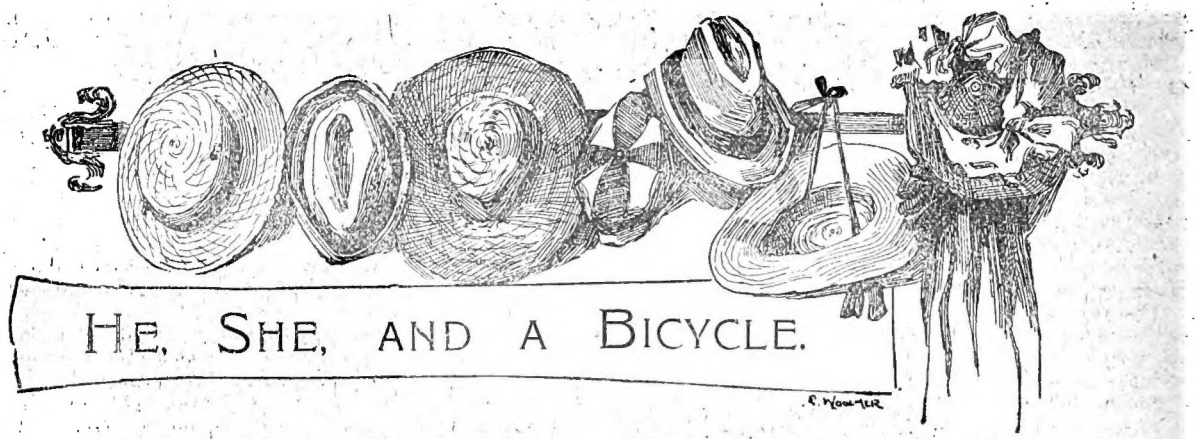

He, She, and a Bicycle.

They had quarrelled again. They were always quarrelling, but this last affair was a battle royal.

She declared that he was arrogant, arbitrary, abusive, and abominable. And she looked so adorably impertinent when she said these appalling things that he felt like shaking her soundly and kissing her full on her red, rebellious mouth.

But he didn't. He only took up his hat, and with his laziest air and most mocking smile said he had the extreme honour of wishing her good afternoon.

Then he took himself to his club and ordered brandy and soda and sat over it an hour, looking haughty and cold and bored while inwardly he was raging furiously.

She waited until the door shut behind him, and then announced to the furniture that she would teach him a lesson that he wouldn't forget in a hurry. Then she stamped a small foot, and shook a small fist at his picture on the mantelpiece.

Next she went upstairs and made a most careful toilet, with deliberate intent to go forth and walk where she would be sure to meet the someone over whom they had quarrelled.

Then she threw herself, frills, laces, feathers, and all, on her bed, and cried until her dear little eyes were very red indeed.

And these imbeciles were neither married, affianced, nor yet "lovers." They were simply very good friends. They did not believe in love—that nonsense!

As if anyone of taste and judgment and worldly knowledge does in these days.

"Why, love has gone out of date," she was wont to say, with that charming, cynical air she was pleased to affect at times. "You and I are chums, *bons camarades*, good fellows together. Love? Rubbish!"

He, being a cunning dog, apparently consented to this theory.

He knew that the New Woman blight had struck her, and that he must give her time to get over it. After she had fully recovered he hoped for great events, which were to include a wedding, a home, and a happy domestic life.

She delighted in her *rôle* of "Bachelor Girl." She wore stand-up collars and cutaway coats, and thrust her hands in the pockets of her tweed walking gowns with a gentlemanly air which, being so absolutely at variance with her personality, was simply ludicrous. For if ever there was a soft, dainty, lovable bit of femininity it was this girl who turned up her saucy nose at love, and demanded scope for herself, scope, too, with an unusually large S.

"Marriage? What is marriage?" she would say. "Marriage is a mistake. A woman who is married is a slave to the whims, caprices, and insolence of her master. Women have borne this burden of matrimony long enough. Let them now develop themselves; let them grow and expand and show to the world the heights to which they may attain."

And so she rode a bicycle, and was secretary of a Ladies' Debating Society and believed herself a progressive woman indeed.

All this was very hard for him to bear. There were times when he gnashed his teeth in the impotence of despair, and longed to pick her up bodily—this small, caressable, defiant thing—and carry her away from debating societies, stand-up collars, knickerbockers, and kindred horrors, and teach her the sublimity of love.

But as the methods of the Middle Ages are not good form in these days, he was forced to content himself with an occasional outbreak of remonstrance, entreaty, and, to-day, command.

And herein was the cause of this fierce contest, the smoke of which yet lingered in the air. He had demanded that she should not bike in knickerbockers with a contemptible cad.

She had replied that she should bike when, where, and with whom she pleased, and that she really could not see what business it was of his, whereupon he had stalked off to brandy and soda, and she had taken to her bed.

Now, as I have said, he was a cunning dog.

He pondered over the situation, and at last evolved a scheme of revenge and ultimate conquest.

There was in her circle of acquaintances one young woman of whom she always spoke with a lofty and disdainful air. To this particular young woman he now addressed a note asking if he might have the honour of riding with her the next afternoon in the Park. When he received a gracious note in the affirmative a grin of unholy joy lighted up his stern, dark face.

Accordingly, the next afternoon, when she, in a tan Eton jacket, and the snuggest, smartest knickerbockers possible, was bowling along through the Park with the Contemptible Cad, she suddenly saw approaching on the tan the man she had flouted, tormented, and annoyed in every possible way, and whom she had come to look upon as her special property, devotedly bending over That Girl, faultlessly attired, and looking very dainty and feminine indeed.

Somehow her knickerbockers suddenly appeared vulgar, and she wished she had a skirt to hide them.

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She saw That Girl give them a covert glance of quiet scorn as she rode by.

Matters were immediately made worse by the remark of the Contemptible Cad:

"Bah Jove, how stunning she looked! Aw—after all you know, a pretty woman never looks so well as in an irreproachable habit, don't you think?"

And then she snapped out "No!" to the great surprise of the Contemptible Cad, and said she had a headache, and would go home at once. In vain her escort told her that a spin would be the best medicine for her head. She paid no attention to his maunderings. Home she would go—home she went.

The rest of the afternoon she spent in composing and arranging the chilling, scathing speech with which she proposed to annihilate her *bon camarade* that evening when he called.

But he did not come.

Then it was that she began to have a funny little sensation in the neighbourhood of her heart, and a funny little choking lump in her throat. She had been so sure of him. He had always been so devoted. He had never failed her before. What did it mean? Could That Girl——

And she saw him again on horseback, bending over the graceful, pretty girl at his side. Ah! a new, a tormenting, a cruel emotion seized this self-poised, independent, progressive young woman. For the first time in her life she knew what it was to be jealous.

"Could he have suffered so when he asked her not to bicycle with the Contemptible Cad?" This was not an agreeable question, but it kept thrusting its face in hers, despite her efforts to laugh it away.

She passed a very miserable evening alone. She tried to read an instructive article on "The Advancement of Woman," but its dreary platitudes bored her. A dark, strong, tender face would come between her and the pages of the magazine she held.

She glanced at the illustrations of bicycling women in certain comic papers, and shudderingly wondered if she looked like them.

At last she could endure it no longer, and, sitting down at her desk, wrote a curt little note with just a tinge of friendliness, enough, she thought, to bring him to her feet the next evening.

But she reckoned without her host.

Next day came a courteously-worded reply, stating that until she showed some disposition to cease certain customs which she knew perfectly well made him unhappy, he would beg her to excuse him from seeing her.

This was a blow.

He had so long submitted to her dictatorial little ways, so long had fetched and carried and waited, that his sudden revolt was actually stupefying.

When she recovered a trifle from her amazement, she tossed her head and said that settled it.

But it didn't.

As the days went by she missed him, missed his devotion, kindness, and loyalty; missed his companionship, the pleasant confidences, the talk, the laughter—yes, even the quarrels.

It became intolerable at last, and so one day she let the woman come to the surface, and sent him a sweet, cordial note asking him to come and be reconciled.

"Now," she said, as she arrayed herself in the gown he liked best, "I must not concede too much. Man is an overbearing animal. He takes all he can get. I must remember that I have a cause to maintain."

But when she went towards him with outstretched hands, blushing divinely, she looked so sweet, so radiant, so womanly, he suddenly snatched her to his heart and kissed her rapturously.

"This is not a strictly friendly proceeding," she began, endeavouring to escape from the arms which held her as if they would never grant release.

"Darling," he said, "never mind about the friendship—let that go. We are no longer comrades and good fellows. It is useless to try to cheat me by those terms. I love you—love you, do you hear? And you love me, or you would never have sent for me. But I shall go away for ever unless you accede to my terms."

"And what are they?" she murmured, hiding her face on his heart to escape the storm of kisses.

"Unconditional surrender. No debating societies, no knickerbockers, no progression. A wedding next month."

She hesitated a moment, as she saw her freedom and the cause for which she had been ready to lay down her life, slipping away from her. Then lifting her face she looked at him with her heart in her eyes.

"Do you know," she murmured, "I think I must have loved you all along, or I would not have fought so with you."

So they were reconciled, and lived happily ever afterwards.

W. Fewmore.

He: "You have stolen my heart."

She: "That's a nice thing to say after you have been begging me for six weeks to accept it."

A bald-headed man fainted the other day, and was very indignant when he was coming to at hearing a Cockney exclaim: "Give him hair! Give him hair!"

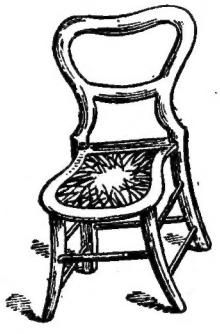
"Helen, say that you will be mine."

"I shall say nothing of the sort. If you care to be my husband, however, we can discuss the question."

"Why will you not announce our engagement, sweetheart?"

"Why, Edgar, it is so beautiful to be engaged secretly, as we are, without letting a single person know about it. Every one of my friends envies me."

WHY IS THIS CHAIR LIKE A BILL BEING PAID?



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FOR ANSWERING THIS RIDDLE AND OTHERS.

See this week's "Pearson's Weekly."

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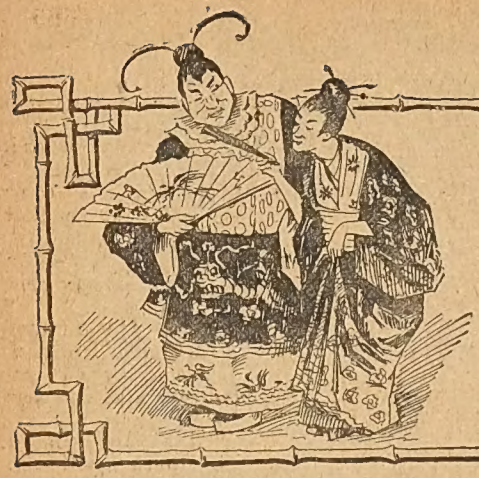

Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

V.—HE TURNS TO PHRENOLOGY AND FINDS VARIOUS BUMPS AND ADVENTURES.

NOTHING but a faint smile about the corners of his mouth and a gurgling at intervals in his throat indicated to Mrs. Bowser during the dinner-hour that Mr. Bowser had a little surprise in store for her. It was useless for her to guess what it was. And she therefore waited in patience till they had returned to the sitting-room. Then Mr. Bowser produced a little book and looked it over for ten minutes before he said:

"You have heard of phrenology, of course? If I am not mistaken, old Professor Fowler once examined your head."

"Is that book about phrenology?" she quietly asked.

"It is. I am going to post myself a bit. To-day I felt the heads of three different men in the office, and told the character of each and every one."

"I thought it was about time. I believe it's about a week since you dropped the last new thing."

"I expected you'd say something mean," replied Mr. Bowser, but without his usual heat and without violence to the family cat rubbing against his leg. "If I had brought home a pocket Bible or a book of hymns, it would have been just the same. Phrenology is a recognised science. It is an interesting study. Why not study it with me?"

"Because I don't believe in it. You might as well feel the corns and bunions on a person's foot as the bumps on his head."

"You'd say that, of course, but I can soon convince you to the contrary. I'll feel your bumps, and, with the aid of this little book, I'll read your character as straight as a string. Just sit where you are, and——"

"You'll do nothing of the kind," she interrupted. "It's all nonsense, and you'd better put in your time reading history."

"Then take the book and feel my head. All the bumps are named."

"And, if what I find doesn't happen to suit you, there'll be a row. Let us have a game of draughts and pass a pleasant evening."

"Now, then, don't be silly," coaxingly remarked Mr. Bowser. "Let's see what there is to this thing. I pledge you my word not to get annoyed, even if you find me a murderer. Take the book and give it a trial."

Mrs. Bowser allowed herself to be persuaded. Selecting a chart of a man's head, she passed her fingers over Mr. Bowser's skull and presently said:

"According to phrenology, your bump of impetuosity is abnormally developed. You are also very conceited. You have no fixed purpose, but jump from one thing to another. You are quick-tempered and very obstinate. If you had more strength of character, you might make a mark in the world, but as it is——"

"You are also very conceited."

"But as it is, madam, I am very much obliged to you," said Mr. Bowser, as he rose up and reached for the book. "I might have known, of course, that you would slander me."

"I gave it exactly as it is in the book."

"Well, let it go. If it was your intention to turn me from my purpose you have failed. I

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shall continue to study the art. Perhaps the cook won't object to becoming a subject."

Mrs. Bowser smiled as he started for the kitchen, but raised no objections. The cook was just finishing her dinner dishes as Mr. Bowser invaded her domains.

"You have heard of phrenology?" he queried as he pointed to the book in his hand.

"Has the mistress any complaint to make of the cooking?" she asked in reply.

"Not that I know of. I was asking you if you knew about phrenology. It relates to the bumps on your heard, you know."

"And what of the bumps on me head? Did the mistress ask about me bumps when she engagad me? If she objects to them, let her give me notice."

"My good girl, you don't understand. All of us have bumps on our heads. By feeling the bumps one can tell a person's disposition. For instance, one bump shows a sweet temper, another shows self-conceit, another shows obstinacy, and so on."

"But isn't me cookin' all right?" demanded the woman.

"I said it was."

"Then who's to care about the bumps on me head, or me disposition?"

"You don't understand yet," continued Mr. Bowser. "By feeling the bumps on your head I can tell you——"

"You'll never feel my bumps while I'm alive!" interrupted the cook, "and if you ain't out of this kitchen in two jiffs I'll walk off and leave you without a cook!"

Mr. Bowser retired. It was a question whether he retired in good order or not. He realised that Mrs. Bowser had stood at the head of the stairs and overheard all, and that he had made a mess of it. She had a smile on her face as he entered the sitting room, and that smile brought a determination to his heart to conquer or die.

Mr. Bowser called to him.

"You—you probably advise me to give it up, don't you?" he asked.

"You might practice outside," she suggested.

"And so I will!" he retorted, as the red came to his face. "I have set out to post myself in phrenology, and by the beard of my grandfather, I'll do it or die!"

He walked out into the hall, clapped on his hat and opened the door, and stepped out. There was a man hanging over a gate near. He wasn't a tramp, but a working man who was sweet on a girl living next door, and was waiting for her to appear. Mr. Bowser called to him, and he came in off the street and asked what was wanted.

"Would you like to earn ten shillings in about fifteen minutes?" was asked.

"Rather," was the curt and expressive reply.

"Have you ever heard of phrenology?"

"If I have, I've forgotten. Is the gas leaking or a water pipe busted?"

"Phrenology has to do with the bumps on your head. I feel your bumps and read your character by them. I believe in it, but my wife doesn't. I want you to come and sit down for a few minutes while I show her that I'm right."

The man was willing. He followed Mr. Bowser in and was referred to as a "subject." Mrs. Bowser kept her chair and became interested.

"Now, then," began Mr. Bowser, after two minutes spent in locating various bumps, "I find your bump of musical talent above the average. I should say that you can play on several different instruments, and also that you have a fairly good voice."

"Great snakes, sir," gasped the man, "but I never could even raise a tune on a mouth organ; and as for singing, everybody runs away when I try it!"

Mr. Bowser flushed up and swallowed at the lump in his throat, and dared not look at Mrs. Bowser. After a minute he continued:

"I think you are inclined to be very religious. Are you a Sunday-school teacher?"

"Great Scott, no! Religious? Why, I'm the man who ate up a chapter of Exodus for a bet!"

"But you reverence truth," persisted Mr. Bowser as his face began to pale.

"Mebbe I do, sir, but I am noted for 'my fairy tales' all the same."

"And are you not tender-hearted—that is, don't you love children?"

"Well, I'm expected to be arrested to-morrow for banging a kid about this afternoon. Your henology, or whatever you call it, don't seem to work. I should think your wife is right."

"It never works unless there are brains under the bumps," stiffly replied Mr. Bowser as he handed the man his half-sovereign and accompanied him to the door.

When he returned, he stood before Mrs. Bowser, and glared at her a moment, and then said:

"Woman, this thing has gone to the limit. The conspiracy is plain. In your malicious desire to—to——"

Then Mrs. Bowser began to laugh. He gestured, but it did not stop her. He towered over her, but she continued to laugh. He shouted something about his solicitor, and her solicitor and divorce, but she hung to her chair and laughed. There was but one way to save his dignity. Like a crowbar on legs he marched down the hall, and like a crowbar with stiff knees he mounted the stairs, and two hours later she went to find him asleep, and his bump of conceit all flattened out.

M. QUAD.

Next Week: "HE WOULD HAVE SPENT A PLEASANT EVENING BUT FOR A BUTCHER'S BILL."

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A PHILOSOPHICAL COURTSHIP.

MONSIEUR ATHANASE GUILLEMOT, old, ugly, gouty, affable as a porcupine, gracious as a bear, one day gave his young and charming wife the only pleasant surprise he had ever vouchsafed to her during the seven years of their marriage.

He died, after two hours' illness, from congestion of the brain. Madame Guillemot found herself a widow at twenty-eight, and she did not, even for a moment, think of imitating the example of the widows of Malabar by burying herself alive in her husband's tomb.

Truth obliges me even to state that she managed to console herself with extreme facility. The matter was understood by everybody, and offended nobody. The old bear's wretched disposition was well known, and the condolences addressed to his spouse very nearly resembled congratulations.

And for her part, in receiving them, and in putting on a becoming air of bereavement under her long crape veil, she breathed sighs that savoured much more of relief than grief, and in fact quite plainly meant "What a good riddance!"

When the formal period of mourning had strictly expired—not a day longer—black gave place to grey and mauve in Madame Guillemot's costumes, and these colours, six months' after—to the very hour—gave precedence to pink, a tint that suited the pretty blonde widow's complexion admirably.

And when that day arrived, she did not lose one hour in making her *début* in Society to which she brought the *éclat* of the brilliant radiance of her now renewed youth; even as a flower, long confined in the stuffy atmosphere of a hot-house, when restored to the freedom of air and sunlight, bursts out in the full luxuriance of its revivified beauty.

To her physical charms, Madame Guillemot added intelligence, vivacity, and that which never spoils anything—a good income.

Possessed of these manifold attractions, naturally she did not lack admirers in plenty. Indeed, it was not long before those who aspired to the good fortune of being her deceased husband's successor, might be counted as legion.

Among them, not to speak of innumerable supernumeraries of no value, might be counted a court representative, a wealthy manufacturer, a famous lawyer, a distinguished engineer, a fashionable doctor, a county landlord, and the professor of philosophy at the City College, M. Xavier Rochemaure.

A professor of philosophy in love?——Certainly, yes, why not? Is philosophy incompatible with marriage?

Remember Socrates! True, he was not very happy in his domestic relations, but all philosophers do not stumble on cross-grained Zantippes! I will even go so far as to say that a philosopher is more likely to succeed, as a husband, than any other type of man, for if by chance things turn out badly, has he not a whole armoury of principles and logic wherewith to fortify and console himself?

Anyhow, Xavier Rochemaure was so head over heels in love with Madame Guillemot, that one day, to his pupils' amazement, he began his lecture on metaphysics with these remarkable words:

"Metaphysics, gentlemen, is the science which treats of first causes, of spiritual beings, of abstract things. It teaches us to understand the origin of ideas, to reason about the infinite, to examine the origin of our sensations.

"She has pale golden hair, the most beautiful in the world; she has incomparably sweet eyes; her smile lights up everything around her like a ray of purest light——"

Then only did the professor perceive that instead of defining metaphysics he was drawing the portrait of Madame Guillemot. He recaught the thread of his discourse as best he could. Unfortunately, one poor pupil too conscientious, as it turned out in the result, had noted down the master's words, and shortly after, when undergoing an examination for the degree of B.A., he declared to his examiner—and stoutly maintained—that:

"Metaphysics had fair hair, blue eyes, and a beaming smile," a statement that effectually destroyed his chances of getting his degree for another year.

Madame Guillemot never knew that she was the involuntary cause of a very promising and assiduous student being "plucked."

On the other hand, she was not ignorant of the impression she had produced on the heart of the philosopher.

A woman always does know when a man is really seriously in love with her. And in order that she might have no manner of doubt about it, Rochemaure, in this matter more ardent than wise, lost no opportunity of letting her know it. She could not take a step without meeting him. When taking a walk, in the salons,

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at the theatre—everywhere, she encountered two philosophic eyes levelled at hers, imploring pity. Did she pass him silently, she heard sighs deep enough to shake a rock to its foundations. If she spoke to him, she felt convinced that before she had uttered half-a-dozen words, he would be sure to declare his passion and crave its requital.

At length, every day almost, the postman brought her inflammatory epistles in which, in language very poetic but extremely unphilosophic, the poor professer depicted his martyrdom.

Sometimes, wearied by his too constant importunity, Madame Guillemot would let slip some slight sign of impatience, quite uselessly, however, for the love-blinded philosopher could not perceive it.

One day, having exhausted all her artillery of defensive arguments, the pretty widow sighed:

"Later—we will see—but for the moment, let me weep for Athanase—Oh, Athanase!"

In an unreflecting burst of sympathy, Rochemaure was naïve enough to reply:

"Yes! We will mourn for him together!"

Madame Guillemot responded by a bright glance of her lovely eyes, wherein was no vestige of a tear, and which very evidently meant:

"You big silly!"

* * * * *

As a matter of fact, however, Rochemaure was not indifferent to Madame Guillemot. He was thirty-five, well built, elegant in manners, dress and language.

He was a professor of the new school of philosophers, who do not consider it obligatory to wear badly fitting clothes and a stern forbidding manner in order to appear *savant*. He was known to possess an income abundantly sufficient to absolve his courtship from any trace of suspicion of cupidity. His future university career promised to be brilliant. He was already mentioned as likely to be the successor of a high functionary in the College of France.

The "College of France" meant Paris, and *entré* to the official world, and this prospect was by no means unattractive to the young and pretty widow.

Rochemaure's candidature for her hand, therefore, had real chances of success, although the poor fellow did not know it.

Who can explain the mystery of the feminine heart? No philosopher of the past or of our own time has ever succeeded in fathoming it. The more Madame Guillemot mentally decided to one day become Madame Rochemaure, the less outward sympathy did she exhibit towards the man, who, to herself, was already accepted as her future husband.

Of all her suitors, he was favoured the least with those little happinesses so coveted by all smitten hearts. To be charged with some little commission; to be permitted to carry an opera glass, to bring a book asked for, to post a letter—little things that give the lover honoured to execute the service inexpressible happiness—all these were granted to the crowd of her followers, but denied to Rochemaure.

This harsh treatment drove him to despair.

He became pale and thin—he was visibly wasting away.

Vainly did he invoke to his aid the stoicism of Zeno, the indifference of Seneca—those wise men of antiquity afforded him no comfort whatsoever. Nothing availed for his consolation, and at last, prompted by the elemental feeling that impels a creature to cry out when in pain, he betook himself to his colleague Chazelles, professor of rhetoric at the same college, resolved to confide his trouble to him and ask his advice.

M. Chazelles was a man considerably older than Rochemaure, a good, big, fatherly person, getting grey, and decidedly barrel-shaped. Winter and summer alike he wore an alpaca vest, a white cravat, and slightly coloured spectacles, which hid a pair of very shrewd sharp eyes. He had three weaknesses; his pupils, whom he worshipped; Virgil, Horace, Molière and La Fontaine, whom he knew by heart; and, in the evening, his pipe, moistened by several *bocks*. He affected a very splenetic gloomy temper; never put in an appearance in any drawing-room, and invariably declared himself ill every year when the day of official New Year's visits came round.

But under this grumpy, crusty envelope he concealed a fine intellect, a good heart, and a marvellous knowledge of men—and women, as will be seen.

Rochemaure poured out his soul to him with perfect frankness, omitting no details of his torments and his statement would certainly have severely tried a heart less kindly and a mind less curious than those of Chazelles. He listened to his friend with admirable patience, twirling his thumbs, and looking up at the ceiling. From time to time he smiled slightly during some excessive outburst of youthful enthusiasm displayed by his friend.

When the philosopher finished his long exposition, his confidant, collecting his thoughts for a moment, replaced his spectacles and stroked his beard—the invariable prelude with him of a speech.

He put a few pointed questions to his young colleague, like a doctor, who, disregarding the unimportant verbiage of his patient's statement, interrogates him on points really vital, to enable him to diagnose his case.

"Your case, my dear friend, is very clear. I have not the pleasure of Madame Guillemot's acquaintance, for as you know, I never go into society; but I recognise her type perfectly well, and it is easy for me to classify her—Unconscious coquette, in essence, a good, honest heart—she will make you very happy."

"Eh! Will make me very——?"

"Why certainly! It's as clear as noonday to me that you will be her husband—her official *fiancé* at all events, in—I was about to say a month, but we will give ourselves a little latitude and say six weeks."

"Do you really think so?" exclaimed Rochemaure, sudden hope being born within him.

"I do think so, or rather, I may say I am certain it would already have happened, if you had gone about the business in the right way. But these philosophers! what do they know? It is only us of the race of poets who have any practical knowledge!

"I tell you, that in a very short time you shall be the lucky spouse of Madame Guillemot. But on one condition only; you must obey me implicitly, blindly, without reflection, unresistingly, like a child. You must do all I tell you, and nothing but that—at the first symptom of disobedience or rebellion on your part, I shall leave you to your own devices, that is to say, to make a mess of the business!"

"Agreed! I swear to obey!"

"Very well—what are you going to do to-night?"

"I am going to pass the evening at Madame Guillemot's."

"You are going to do nothing of the kind. You are going to give me the pleasure of dining with me. Afterwards we will pass the evening by going to hear the

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great physician Richardet's lecture on 'The Microbe of the Dry Rot in Sheep.' It will not be very amusing probably, but it will bring us to eleven o'clock: a smoke and a *bock* till half-past eleven, and it will then be time to go to bed."

"But Madame Guillemot will——"

"Madame Guillemot will do without you!"

"But all the other fellows will be there!"

"Oh, you jealous villain! Let them play their last stake, poor devils! They haven't a ghost of a chance!"

"But——"

"Oh! You are beginning to show resistance! The arrangement is off then, so far as I am concerned—good night!"

"No! Don't go, Chazelles. I yield—although——"

"I excuse you the 'although,' since you bow to my will, so *en route*, comrade!"

* * * * *

The next day, Rochemaure went to his friend positively beaming. He held out to him a dainty satin card, perfumed with heliotrope; it was an invitation to dinner from Madame Guillemot. In a "P.S." she had written:

"What were you doing yesterday, Monsieur Unfaithful, that you should have deprived us of your company?"

Chazelles returned the card.

"Good! My plan is working all right—better even than I had hoped! Decidedly, it will not take six weeks, my friend, the thing will be done in a month!

"Now, go sit down at my desk, and write from my dictation:

"'MADAME,—I regret very much that I shall not be able to accept your kind invitation——'"

"What?"

"'Kind invitation—'" Chazelles continued to dictate, implacable:

"'Last night, I went to a most interesting scientific lecture, and on Friday I am to attend a demonstration "On the Use of Liquified Air for the Production of Carburet of Calcium." The date of my probable appointment to the College of France is drawing near, and I consider it right that I should show by my presence, my sympathy with my colleagues, who have arranged the demonstration.

"'These meetings are not public, otherwise it would have afforded me great pleasure to send you tickets.

"'I am, Madame.'"

Docile and submissive, Rochemaure had written from his friend's dictation.

"Finish as you like, Rochemaure, but write nothing that savours of the lover, at your peril!"

When the letter was finished, Chazelles read it again.

"First rate!" he exclaimed. "Now, tell me, where does Madame Guillemot usually go for a walk?"

"To the Mall, about four o'clock."

"Very good. We will go there together after leaving the college to-morrow. You must salute Madame in a friendly way—but from some distance."

"Must I not go up and speak to her?"

"Decidedly not!"

"Oh, Chazelles! how cruel you are!"

"You will change your opinion in a month's time, my friend."

After six days had passed, Chazelles gave his friend permission to call on Madame Guillemot, but his visit must be paid on her reception day only, and at the hour when there was always many people there; he fixed the duration of the visit at twenty minutes.

"I will wait for you below!" he said, threateningly.

Rochemaure afterwards gave him an account of the interview. Madame Guillemot had seemed to him gloomy, sad, absorbed.

"Splendid!" said Chazelles, pitilessly. "We shall not have to wait a month!"

After a few days' interval, during which Rochemaure remained under the strict surveillance of his friend, he received another communication from Madame Guillemot—a letter of three pages—very friendly, tender almost, complaining of being "forsaken by a friend, one thought sincere, for whom one had so much esteem, so much sympathy!"

"First rate! splendid! victory!" exclaimed Chazelles.

"What must I do now?" asked Rochemaure.

"Put the letter in your pocket, and in four days from now, go and see Madame Guillemot. I shall be much surprised, if you do not bring me back good news."

* * * * *

But Rochemaure could not wait four days! After three had transpired, he was back at the pretty widow's. He came away wild with delight. Not only had she promised him her hand, she had almost offered it to him.

"Didn't I tell you, my dear friend!" Chazelles responded, to his friend's overflowing gratitude and delight. "Three weeks, even, have not been necessary!"

"But tell me, dear Chazelles, how has the miracle been worked?"

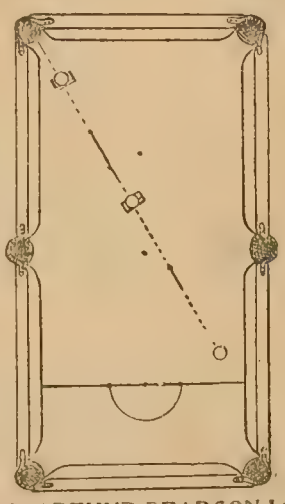
"By simply putting into practice a proverb, which, although it does not figure in the maxims of Aristotle, is none the less profoundly true.

"'Woman is like your shadow; run after her, and she will fly from you; turn your back upon her, she will run after you.' Never forget this wise saying, dear colleague, even in your *ménage*, it will be useful."

W. PICKLES.

Fun on the Billiard Table.

A Collection of 75 Amusing Tricks and Games, with Photographs and Diagrams.



Explanation of Trick and Diagram:

Get two outside covers of any sort of the ordinary match boxes, large size. Place them on the billiard table with a ball on each. Put a third ball in a line with a pocket, and the other two balls as in photo. Play a hard shot with the ball on the table into the pocket through the match boxes, which should fly off the table, and the two balls will occupy the places where the match boxes stood. Price 2s. 6d.

C. ARTHUR PEARSON Ltd., Henrietta treet, W.C.

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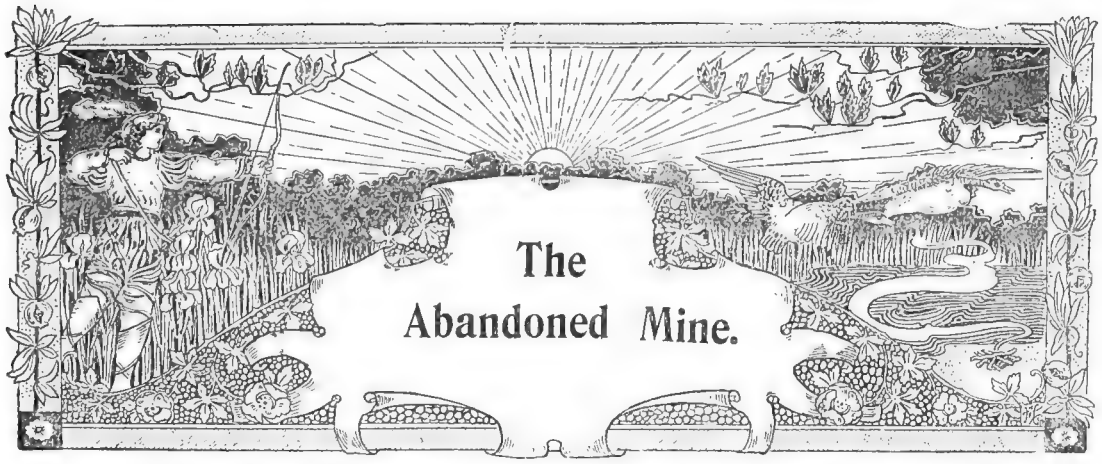

The Abandoned Mine.

A Californian Story.

"Boys, I've been thinkin'."

Bill Williams' three companions who were lounging with him in front of a little log cabin in the Sierra Nevada mountains, sat suddenly erect, and, assuming an air of the most complete astonishment, stared at him curiously for almost a full minute.

"Bill," one of them said, finally, "did you speak jest now, or was I sorter dreamin'?"

"I reckon I spoke, Mr. Brown," Bill Williams replied, carelessly.

"What was that remark you made, Bill?"

"Nothin', only I said I'd been thinkin'."

Brown looked at the other two men and nodded his head, then they all turned their eyes on Bill and scrutinized him wonderingly. After a while old Brown said:

"Bill, are you in earnest?"

"Of course I am," Bill answered. "What makes you ask that?"

"And sure you're thinkin'?"

"Certainly."

There was a long pause, during which Bill Williams' companions looked at him incredulously, but at last Brown spoke again.

"Boys," he said, "it's strange what curious things will happen sometimes. We ain't got no call to doubt Bill's word, but it seems hard to believe that he'd do anythin' so unnatural to him as thinkin'."

Bill was lying on the ground, with his arms folded under his head, and pretended that he did not hear.

"Wonder if this is the first attack of the kind Bill ever had?" George Gray questioned earnestly and with evident alarm.

"I guess it is," Brown replied, shaking his head seriously. "I've known Bill a long time and I never saw him have a spell like this before."

"It came on mighty sudden, d'dn't it?" Luke Jones observed, availing himself of the privilege of having his say.

"Must have," Brown replied. "At supper Bill seemed as well as ever he was."

"Wonder if we oughtn't to git a doctor," from Gray. "I'm fearful Bill's in a pretty bad fix."

"He ought to have some kind of a stimulant to brace him up, at least," Jones remarked. "He must be terribly exhausted after such a violent strain on his constitution, and such a desperate exercisin' of his mind."

"Let me feel your pulse, Bill," Brown said, solicitously, approaching his victim.

"Do you feel much weak?" Jones asked, also looking at Bill with mocked sympathy.

Bill sat up and looked at his tormentors in well-feigned surprise.

"What in the nation are you blame crazy loots talkin' about?" he asked.

"We were afraid that spell of thinkin' you had on might prove fatal," Brown answered.

"Oh you were, eh? Well, you needn't be uneasy. Just because fools like you never think ain't no sign smart men like me never do such things."

There was no reply to this, neither Brown nor his companions seeming to have anything to say. After a short pause, Bill went on, speaking seriously.

"What I was thinkin' about," he said, "is that abandoned mine up the gulch. If it turns out to be as rich as it looks, I'll get a good stake out of it in a short time."

"Then what will you do?" Brown asked.

"I guess I'll go back to good old England."

"And marry and settle down—eh?"

A shadow passed over Bill Williams' face and he became grave in a moment.

"No," he said; "I'll not do that. At least I'll not marry unless——"

Bill stopped suddenly and sat gazing longingly out across the valley that stretched before him. He drew a deep sigh of resignation, and an air of sadness seemed to settle down over him. Presently Brown touched his arm and said:

"Unless what, Bill?"

Bill hesitated a moment, then replied:

"Unless the woman I love becomes free."

"I don't understand," Brown said.

"Why should you?" Bill answered. "It is nothing to you. It is nothing to you that the woman I loved and love yet, was driven into a marriage with another man back there at home, while I was out here in California trying to get a little start in the world so that I could go back and make her my wife. It wouldn't be of any interest to you to know how her father stopped all my

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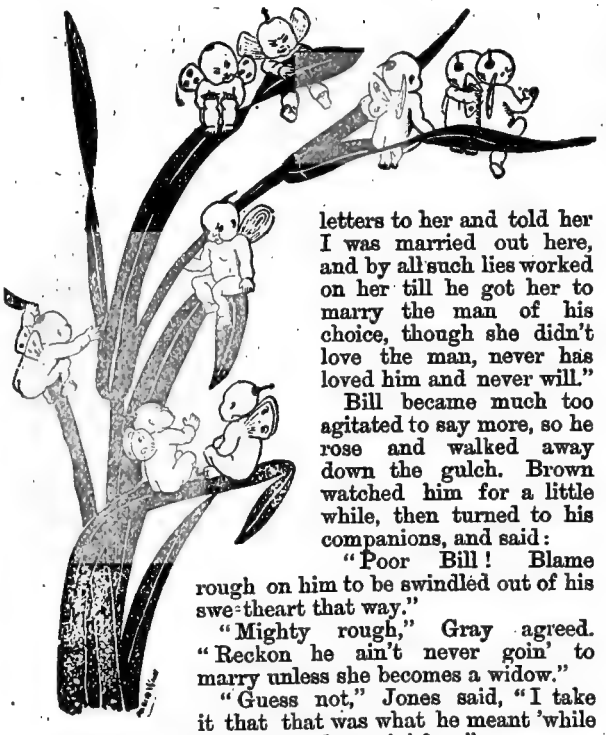

letters to her and told her I was married out here, and by all such lies worked on her till he got her to marry the man of his choice, though she didn't love the man, never has loved him and never will."

Bill became much too agitated to say more, so he rose and walked away down the gulch. Brown watched him for a little while, then turned to his companions, and said:

"Poor Bill! Blame rough on him to be swindled out of his sweetheart that way."

"Mighty rough," Gray agreed. "Reckon he ain't never goin' to marry unless she becomes a widow."

"Guess not," Jones said, "I take it that that was what he meant 'while ago when he spoke about her becomin' free."

Brown took his pipe from his pocket, filled and lighted it, and proceeded to smoke in silence. Two or three minutes passed before he spoke.

"Bill was right worked up," he said, "and I feel kinder sorry for him. I don't want to wish that other man dead, but I can't help wishin' Bill could have his sweetheart an' be happy."

"Maybe he will some day," Gray replied. "Seems like it would be natural, now that he's got a fortune in sight, for him to go back home, git married and settle down."

"He's fixed so far as the fortune is concerned," Jones remarked. "That abandoned mine up thar is as rich as cream, or else I don't know gold when I see it."

"It's rich all right," Brown agreed, "an' I doubt if thar is a more promisin' mine in this whole range. But thar is one thing about that mine that I can't make out."

"What is that?" Gray asked.

"Just this," Brown replied. "Why was that mine ever abandoned?"

Gray and Jones shook their heads, but said nothing, intimating thereby that the question was too deep for them.

"People abandon mines that don't pay to work, and don't give any promise of ever payin'," Brown continued, "But I never before knew a rich-payin' mine bein' abandoned. It's somethin' queer, an' I can't understand it."

Brown was not alone in thinking thus regarding the mine. The same thought had occurred to Bill Williams. To him it appeared remarkably strange that a mine like that should be abandoned. It was a thing entirely beyond his comprehension.

He wasted no time, however, in useless surmising. The mine was his. He had relocated it. He proposed to get the wealth of mineral from it.

Brown and his companions lapsed into silence. They still lounged in front of the cabin and, though an hour had passed, Bill had not returned.

Presently a horseman came riding along the trail which wound up the side of the mountain. He was a stranger and well dressed, and his horse showed that he had travelled over many miles of road. He came on till he reached the cabin and then stopped.

"I am looking for Mr. Williams," he said. "Is he here?"

At that moment Bill came up and he heard the inquiry.

"Williams is my name," he said.

"Are you the gentleman who recently located an abandoned mine in this section?" the stranger asked.

"I am."

"Then it is you with whom I have business. I am a lawyer and I represent the widow of the man who first opened that mine."

"Well, what have I got to do with that?"

"You may have a great deal to do with it and you may have nothing. It all depends on you."

"It does, eh? In that case I guess I have nothing to do with it."

"Not even to recognizing the widow's right to the mine?"

"Certainly not. She has no right to it since her husband abandoned it."

"No legal right, you mean?"

"Yes."

"But how about her moral right?"

"I don't know anything about that. The business of minin' for gold ain't run on moral principles."

"You propose, then, to hold the mine?"

"I do."

"Well you can hold it, of course, I am not going to dispute the legality of your title. But since I am here I want to tell you why I came. Shall I proceed?"

"If you choose."

"In the first place, then, a man left his wife and his home in England and came out here in search of a fortune in the gold fields. After a long struggle and many disappointments he located a rich mine and developed it slightly. Then he went to the nearest town to get supplies and to make other preparations for working his claim, and while he was there he became ill, and, after several weeks' illness, died. In the meantime, however, he had written to his wife, telling her of his rich strike and urging her to come to him. She came, but only to find him dead. She is here now, a stranger in a strange land, homeless, friendless, destitute."

Bill Williams began to shift about uneasily, but he remained silent.

"The woman came to me," the lawyer went on, "and told me her condition with tears in her eyes. She also spoke of the mine her husband had located, and asked me to help her find it. I made inquiries and found that the mine was somewhere in this section; so I rode this way, and back at the next camp I learned that you had relocated an abandoned mine that was very rich. I soon satisfied myself that your mine is the one for which I was searching. Hence I am here."

Bill Williams became quite restless and he fidgeted painfully. After awhile he said:

"And you are here to see if I won't give up the mine?"

"Well, not exactly," the lawyer replied. "I am only here to put the situation to you in its true light. Legally the mine is yours. Morally it is the woman's.

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She lost it through no fault of hers. She lost it through the sickness and death of her husband. Its loss is a crushing blow to her. It was all she had left, and she is now a helpless widow."

Williams turned away and for two or three minutes paced slowly back and forth in front of the cabin. He was quite serious and very thoughtful.

"Well," he said at last, stopping in front of the lawyer, "What do you think I ought to do?"

"I don't like to say," the lawyer replied. "I have stated the situation to you and I prefer to let your generosity suggest what you should do. If you feel that you ought to give the poor woman a few dollars——"

"I don't feel any such thing as that," Williams interrupted.

"I am sorry. I hoped you would be willing to do that much for her."

"What right have I to offer her a few dollars, when, if your story is true, the whole mine is hers?"

"What do you propose then?"

"I propose to let her have the mine. What else can I do, as an honest man? I have my faults, but I hope I ain't low-down sneakin'-mean enough to rob a poor, helpless widow because the law gives me the power. I'll go with you and see the woman and if your story is correct I'll give up the mine to her."

The lawyer was surprised and he did not hesitate to say that he thought Bill would be doing quite enough if he gave up half of the mine. Bill only shook his head.

"Bill," said Brown, "don't give it up. Remember that if you do you can't go back home, and that woman may be free an' waitin' for you."

"I can't help that," Bill replied. "I ain't goin' to swindle no widder woman."

The next morning Bill and the lawyer set out for town. Brown and the other two miners shook their heads and said Bill was "acting foolish," but when he put it to them seriously whether they would do differently under the same circumstances they made no reply, but looked a little sheepish.

In the afternoon of the third day Bill returned, but he was not alone. There was a woman with him, and to the astonishment of the miners he introduced her to them as Mrs. Williams.

"Was she the widder that owned the mine?" Brown asked afterward.

"She was," Bill replied. "Likewise she was the woman I knowed and loved before I came out."

F. WATSON.

FRIEND: "What are you doing?"
Poet: "Writing a poem on 'Autumn.'"
Friend: "But it isn't autumn yet."
Poet: "It will be before the poem is accepted.

BANK CASHIER: "You'll have to prove you are Pat Grogan before I can cash this cheque."

Pat Grogan: "Bedad, that's aisy enough. Here's me photygraph as I had took last week. Ye'd know me anywhere by it."

A BARRISTER tormented a poor witness so much with questions, that the old man declared he was so exhausted that he must have a drink of water before he could say another word.

Upon this the judge remarked:

"I think, sir, you must have done with the witness now, for you have pumped him dry."

WHAT A SHOCKING SHOCK - - - - - - KRUGER WILL GET

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£250 will be given to the reader of PEARSON'S WEEKLY from whom we receive a Coupon bearing the exact date upon which the

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Send it in to us as soon as you like.
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If two competitors name the exact day the money will go to the one who gives the correct hour of that day. If two or more give the correct day and hour the £250 in full will go to him whose coupon we received bearing the earliest date of sending in. Pretoria time, which is about an hour and three quarters in advance of English time, must be stated.

The Editor's decision must be final, and competitors must only enter on that understanding.

The Editor reserves the right to close this competition at a day's notice.

Address all envelopes to "War Editor," Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Pretoria Coupon, S.S.] *May 12, 1900.*

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Day..... *Hour*.....

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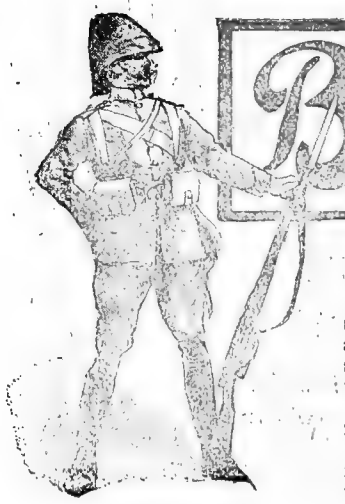


Briton or Boer?

By GEORGE GRIFFITH.

INTRODUCTION.

FOR years past Britain and the Transvaal have been spoiling for a fight, and it was left to that well-known author, Mr. George Griffith, to write this strong and exciting serial nearly four years ago graphically describing a huge war between the two countries.

The story, coming so soon after the Jameson Raid, was read with unusual interest.

Now that Briton and Boer are in deadly conflict it will be interesting to read the story, and see how far the imagination of the author has actually come true.

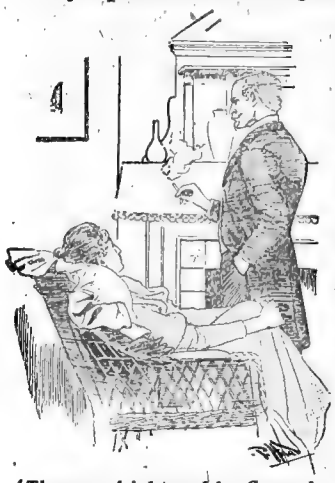
CHAPTER XXVIII.

COMING FACE TO FACE.

THE Council of State sat until pretty far into the night, and when it was over, Prince Paul, who had witnessed and taken part in the whole proceeding, went back to his hotel very well pleased indeed with its issue and probable results. When he entered the sitting-room, he said, in answer to the Princess's inquiry as to the news:

"I think I may say that my presence has had a very good effect. The old gentleman and his councillors are getting decidedly nervous; they see that the bungling and delay which has led to and come out of the hitch with the Free State and the Dutch-Afrikanders of the Cape may have very serious consequences. There is no doubt that they are fairly frightened by General Carrington's success in the North, and that really wonderful exploit of the Johannesburghers.

"They expected what the English would call a walk over. Instead of that they have had three decided slaps in the face, as the English would say again. The rank and file, too, if one may use such a term, are getting very uneasy at the absolute stoppage of all communications. They have an uncomfortable feeling of being hemmed in.



"They are frightened by General Carrington's success."

"There are very ugly accounts, too, always coming in about the natives. They are disappearing rapidly into their own fastnesses, and making sudden descents on isolated farms. Of course, they know perfectly well that the majority of the farmers are away on service, and naturally take advantage of the fact. Personally, I fancy the Executive feel that if this goes on much longer a good many of the sturdy peasant soldiers of the Republic will take French leave, and go back to their farms. Hence they have decided to push matters to a crisis and give them something else to think about. The final orders are to be issued to-night, and to-morrow they will begin to do what they ought to have done a fortnight or more ago."

This proved to be almost exactly the correct statement of the case. The next morning Pretoria, which had now completely lost the peaceful aspect it had worn a year before, presented the appearance of a great military camp in the fullest activity. Kirk Plein, Markt Plein, Arcadia Plein, and Eastwood Plein were crowded with long waggons, with arched tilts above the hind wheels, loaded with stores and provisions.

The long bullock teams were standing patiently under the yokes; mounted men armed with rifle and bandolier, and dressed for the most part, in short jackets and trousers tucked into long boots, with soft slouched hats pulled over their eyes to protect them from the rain that was pouring down incessantly, were threading their way among the waggons and the oxen, or riding along the streets at a fast tripple.

Some of them were mere strippings—lads of fifteen and sixteen—who had never heard a shot fired in anger, and others were old, white-bearded men who remembered the Kaffir wars of the Forties and the first Declaration of Independence, men who hated the British rule and all other things British for the same reason that they hated and feared the Powers of Darkness—because it was their religion to do so.

Smartly uniformed artillerymen and more smartly dressed policemen were also riding hither and thither on various errands. The old Artillery Camp by the hospital, overlooking the Johannesburg Road, the Wonder Boom Poort on the Northern Ridge, and the others on Meintje's Hill and Timeball Hill were alive with bustling activity. A constant stream of orderlies, policemen, and members of the Raad and the Executive was passing in and out of the various doors of the Government Building, and altogether it was manifest that a great effort was about to be made.

There, indeed, were those in Pretoria who were beginning to think that it was beginning to be made too late. These were they who grasped the full importance of the extraordinary exploit achieved by the leaders of the Exodus from Johannesburg. It had thrown the country back in the matter of communications to the days when the slow-moving trek-waggon was the only means of transport. The railway and telegraph to the south, the most important of all, were ruined. Before the Exodus it had been a journey of only a few hours from Pretoria to the Free State and

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British borders, but now it was a journey of weeks. It would be months before Elandsfontein Junction could be put into working order, and every bridge from Germi-ton to Volksrust had been destroyed.

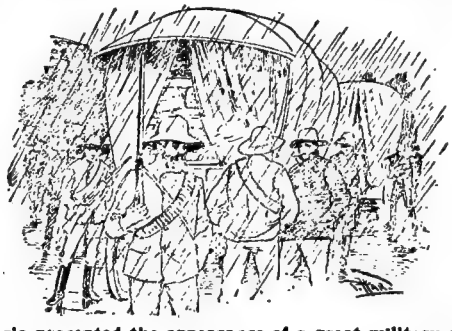
There was practically no native labour to be had, the rains were heavy, and the transport roads over the veld were in a fearful condition. Worse than all, the rinderpest, which had broken out in the Marico district in August, had spread with frightful rapidity, and it was with the greatest difficulty that sufficient oxen could be procured to draw the waggon trains of ammunition, guns, and stores through the mire of the roads and the drifts of the swollen rivers.

All this was greatly in favour of the Loyalists, and did much to counteract the enormous numerical superiority of the Boers. The railway and telegraph system of the British territories were intact, saving in British Bechuanaland, and at the first news of hostilities, Major-General Goodenough had promptly garrisoned De Aar Junction on the Cape Town and Kimberley line, Middleburg, Naauwpoort, and Colesberg, on the line from Port Elizabeth to the Free State border, and Molteno and Burghersdorp on the East London lines as strongly as the miserably inadequate forces at his disposal would enable him to do.

Commander Robertson's successful rush through Standerton and Volksrust, and the destruction of the great bridges over the Vaal and the Klipp River, had further enabled the Commander-in-Chief of Natal and Major-General Cox not only to occupy the almost impregnable passes of Lang's Nek, Amajuba Hill, and the railway route with a respectable force, but also to take up almost an unassailable position commanding Van Reenan's Pass, through which the main line from Port Elizabeth crosses the Drakensberg Mountains into the Free State territory, and to block Sunday's Rest Pass, Muller's Pass, and Botha's Pass, from which the old transport roads converge on the important post of Newcastle.

Major-General Goodenough had also, in view of the possible rising of the rebel Dutch in the Cape, occupied the Hex River Pass, Sir Lowry's Pass, and the Tulbagh Pass, which form the only practicable approaches to the Cape Peninsula from the interior.

Happily he had received the thrice-welcome supply of arms captured by Admiral Dale in Delagoa Bay, while the disaffected Dutch, were still wondering when the signal to rise would be given, and he immediately strengthened his feeble garrisons by sending five thousand of the men whom Admiral Dale had enabled him to arm to the various points where risings were most to be feared, and



Pretoria presented the appearance of a great military camp.

where it was most necessary that communications should be kept open.

It thus came about that before hostilities began on a general scale, the Loyalists, though outnumbered by some five or six to one, held all the strong places along the enemy's frontier, and enjoyed rapid communication with the sea, of which, of course, they had absolute and undisputed control.

The lack of the most modern rifles, the scarcity of machine-guns and field artillery was, however, still the greatest source of danger; for not only were there not enough rifles to arm the Loyalist burghers who had volunteered for service, but even the regular forces of the Cape and Natal were neither uniformly armed, nor had they by any means weapons of the latest type.

Some had Martini rifles and some Martini carbines which had seen a great deal too much service; others had Sniders, and others, again, Lee-Metford magazine rifles. For each of these, of course, different ammunition was necessary, and the supply of any sort was none too great. Their field-guns, too, were mostly of the almost obsolete muzzle-loading type.

The look-out discovered three large steamers.

This deficiency was as suddenly as it was unexpectedly made good.

On the morning of New Year's Day the look-out on Signal Hill discovered three large steamers rounding Robben Island Point. Almost immediately after the *Daring*, which had been on vidette duty, came flying in with red-hot funnels to report. The fleet in Table Bay instantly beat to quarters, the bugles rang out from fort to fort all round the bay, guns were loaded, magazines opened, and everything made ready to blow the strangers out of the water if they should seek to enter or pass without permission.

But, to the astonishment of everybody, they slowed down off the island, and the Blue Ensign ran up astern of each of them. The next instant the private naval signal fluttered from their mains, and was answered from the shore and the flag-ship. This was accepted as sufficient guarantee of their friendly purpose, and the *Daring* was sent back to escort them into the bay.

But before she reached them two had already been recognised from the shore as the crack Union Liners, *Scott* and *Norman*. The third was a war-ship, and a very formidable customer she looked as she steamed into the bay between her two consorts. She was evidently an armoured cruiser of the most powerful type, a heavily-armed battleship with the speed of an ocean greyhound.

The meaning of the opportune appearance of this most welcome addition to the Loyalists forces in South Africa will be explained in due course. For the present, it will suffice to say that all three ships were loaded up to their decks with brand new Martini-Metford rifles, machine and field-guns of all types, and some two thousand tons of ammunition for all classes of arms.

By the time they had discharged their cargoes in the Alfred Dock, General Goodenough saw to his delight that he could now arm every Loyalist in South Africa, regular and volunteer, with one pattern of rifle, which practically everyone knew how to use, and give them as much ammunition as they could shoot away in six months. In fact, to all intents and purposes the coming of this seeming gift from the gods came near to doubling the effectiveness of the Loyalist fighting force.

The Union steamers, *Greek* and *Gaul*, were lying inside the breakwater, and the *Greek* was at once loaded with an ample consignment of rifles, machine-guns, and ammunition, and sent round to Durban under the protection of the

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new cruiser, something of whose origin character may be guessed from the fact that she was named the *Rhodesia*.

The "G." class of Union boats are specially built for crossing the bar at Durban, and when the *Greek* rounded the bluff in company with her formidable-looking consort, answered the signal from the Fort, and steamed up into the beautiful harbour with her good news and most welcome contents, the good tidings flashed up to Maritzberg and the border, and all over the Colony.

It was better, as the Governor declared, than a reinforcement of ten thousand men, for there were five thousand loyal men already in the Colony, who knew the country like a map, and who could ride and shoot with the best of the Boers themselves, and who nevertheless had vainly asked for arms to protect their homes.

Another excellent effect of the arrival of the *Greek* and the *Rhodesia* was that which it produced on the twelve or fifteen hundred disaffected Dutch burghers throughout the Colony who only wanted an opportunity to rise and join their brother rebels at the Cape.

The main point of the original conspiracy had been to catch the Loyalists unarmed as well as unprepared. What was wanted was a massacre, not a war, and now this pious hope was frustrated, and the would-be rebels saw that when they did rise, it would be to fight out a bitter struggle with men who were fully alive to their danger, and prepared to fight to the last gasp for the honour of their flag and the safety of their homes.

Still, as events proved, the welcome aid had not come a day too soon. By the time the new arms and ammunnition were properly distributed, there were some thirty thousand Loyalist regulars, volunteers, and burghers in the Cape Colony and Natal.

It took a whole fortnight to instruct the majority of these last in the use of their new weapons, and such elements of drill as were necessary to convert them into something like a disciplined fighting force, and hardly had this been done when the result of the Council of State held at Pretoria on the fifteenth of January was made manifest.

On the night of the seventeenth, the news flew all over the British territories in the south that thousands of the rebels had risen in arms all round the Free State border, and in the interior of Cape Colony, and on the top of this came rumour after rumour all through the night vauntingly spread by the rebels, that the Free State burghers had at last joined the Transvaal, and were advancing to the south and east and west, in three great columns, on Norval's Pont, Kimberly, and Charlestown, to join hands with their brethern in the Cape and Natal, and drive the hated English into the sea.

Colonel Baden-Powell read it, and passed it back.

There was little sleep that night in the loyal towns of British South Africa, for everyone felt that now the beginning of the end had come, and that Briton and Boer stood at length full-armed and face to face on the eve of a struggle that was to decide the mastery of half a continent.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Trick that Failed.

For once in a way it happened that rumour fell short of the truth. It was quite true that the Boers, after the union of the Free State and the Transvaal, had decided to divide their forces into the three great columns, numbering some twelve to fourteen thousand men, each fully equipped with artillery and machine-guns, which were to march respectively on Fourteen Streams and Kimberley to the west, Norval's Pont and Burghersdorp to the south, and on Charlestown to the east; but rumour had nothing to say about the column of five thousand men which, according to the President's strategy, was to be launched against General Carrington's entrenched camp under cover of the negotiations for the release of the prisoners taken at Figtree Fort, simply because rumour knew nothing about it.

As it is impossible, even for an essayist in prophetic fiction and his readers, to be in more places than one at the same time, the fortunes of these four several divisions of the Boer forces will have to be followed more or less in succession in order to obtain a clear view of the course of events which led up to the climax of the desperate conflict which both sides now recognised to be inevitable.

As first in time, as well as in geographical position, it will be best to begin with the attack on Major Carrington's position. This, it will be remembered, was at Palapye, the then terminus of the railway, and the capital of King Khama's country. This may be described as a half-way house between Mafeking, the old terminus, and Buluwayo, the southern capital of Rhodesia. It is two hundred and ten miles from Buluwayo, and about three hundred from Mafeking, but, of course, the existence of the railway made it as a matter of fact, very much nearer to the point from which the Boers had to attack it.

The men forming the Commando were drawn mostly from the Marico and Rustenberg districts, which lie between Pretoria and the border of British Bechuanaland. The advantages of this policy were obvious. The column would instantly increase in strength as it went on. Orders had been sent by telegraph along the route, which is intersected by very fair roads, and so the field-cornets would have their men already mustered to join the march. There would be no need to trouble about commissariat, and under the circumstances the journey could easily be made in four days, as in fact it was.

The ever-growing column marched almost exactly over the greater part of Jameson's route to Krugersdorp, but, instead of striking south from Zeerust to Malmani, it held on due east to strike the line of railroad near Ramathlabama, where it almost touches the Transvaal frontier. As the President had said, the Boers held possession of the line and rolling-stock up as far as Shoshong, which is about sixty miles south of Palapye. Hence they were able to concentrate rapidly in the neighbourhood of Khama's deserted capital, and by sunset on the twenty-fifth of January, five thousand Boers were within twenty miles of the entrenched camp.

The three messengers had been sent on a day ahead to present the President's letter to General Carrington accepting his terms, and proposing that there should be a cessation of hostilities for a week in order to enable the released prisoners to return to their homes, and to permit him to perform his part of the bargain.

When the General read the letter he smiled grimly and passed it to Colonel Baden-Powell, who happened to be smoking a cigar with him in his quarters. The Colonel read it, and passed it back, and the two officers looked at each other and smiled in silence, but with considerable meaning.

Then the General laughed aloud, and said:

"The old man seems to forget he isn't treating with the Downing Street people now. I think we had better keep our eyes open, hadn't we?"

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"Well," said Colonel Baden-Powell, "if Uncle Paul wanted to shake hands with me just at present, I should like to feel sure that he hadn't a revolver in the other hand. That letter's too polite and friendly altogether. Don't you think, General, that Bryan and his Matabele chaps might enable us to read between the lines of it?"

"That's the very thing!" said the General, touching the bell on the table beside him. "Just ask Major Bryan to step this way as soon as you can find him," he said to the orderly who presented himself at the door. "Now, between ourselves," he went on, "it seems to me that there is a plant in this. I didn't make my letter over-cordial, and I'm sure the old man and his people must be frightfully sore at what we've done, and if he hadn't something up his sleeve he wouldn't be playing the polite letter-writer like this.

"I don't like that idea of the armistice either. When a Boer proposes an armistice it generally means that he wants time to steal a march on you. These fellows don't fight according to the rules of war—they don't play the game, and I shouldn't be at all surprised if old Uncle Paul didn't spend that week in massing eight or ten thousand men on the border and cutting us off from Mafeking and Kimberley. I'll see him, well—canonised first.

"Ah, Bryan!" he went on, holding out his hand to that now distinguished officer as he entered the room, "we've just received this from His Honour at Pretoria. Just run your eye over it and tell me how the idea of the armistice strikes you."

Major Bryan took the letter and looked at it, handed it back with a little laugh, and said:

"It means, General, that he hasn't got them there already, he wants that week to bring up a biggish force, pay us a surprise visit, and arm the prisoners of war, and cut us to pieces while we are resting on our arms and obeying the terms of the armistice."

"How the deuce did you get hold of that idea, Bryan?" said the General looking up sharply at him. "Arm the prisoners? Confound it, I never thought of that, though I did think of the other."

"It's not altogether my own idea, General," said Major Bryan laughing again. "I got it about ten minutes ago from old Umzilizi. He has been 'smelling' out those three fellows since they came back to camp, and he tells me they have been having a long yarn with Cronje and Branjes, and that fellow Rex, who says that he is descended from the Royal Family, and he came to me and told me that he thought there was some plot for a rescue afoot, and now I see this letter I think that one has only to put two and two together to make out that Uncle Paul wants that week to do it in; at least that's my opinion."

"And mine, too," said the General and Colonel Baden-Powell, almost in a breath. "Well now, Bryan," the General went on, "I'll tell you what I want you to do. Those Matabele fellows of yours are the finest scouts you can possibly have for the work, and you've got them so splendidly in hand now that I don't think they will make any mistakes. I want you to take them quietly out of camp at night-fall to-night, without any of the prisoners knowing anything about it, and find out how far the line is actually clear to the south, and whether there is any respectable force of Boers in the neighbourhood. By that, of course, I mean within twenty or thirty miles of the place.

"I'll leave the details to you. If you find any, of course I shall be glad to know how many of them there are about and what sort of a position they are in. Don't do any fighting if you can possibly help it. We want information, nothing else, at present. If they are going to try and rush the camp you will have plenty of fighting later on—as much as ever those black war-dogs of yours could wish for, for if there is any dodge in this, it will cost our old friend of the Christian principles pretty dearly."

"Very good, General," replied the Major, saluting and going towards the door. "I shall probably have some news for you soon after daybreak."

"I hope so," said the General. "Oh, by-the-way, just tell Captain Murray to come and see me if you meet him. If not, send someone for him."

A few minutes later Captain Murray made his appearance—a short, active, hard-featured little man, tough as pin wire, with keen blue eyes that had looked on many a hard-fought fight in many a distant part of Africa.

Colonel Baden-Powell opened the door, and the two Boers slouched in.

"Murray," said the General, as the little man drew himself up stiffly and saluted, "I've had an altogether too polite letter from Pretoria about the prisoners, and I fancy the old gentleman is going to try and steal a march on us. Major Bryan is going to take his men out scouting to-night, and I want you to have your armoured train in readiness to start at daybreak for the south. Have an engine on each end in case one is disabled, and see that you have plenty of ammunition. You may want it. Meanwhile, will you see that all prisoners are brought in during the day and confined strictly to their location till further orders. But first call out a corporal's guard and have Mr. Cronje and Mr. Brantjes brought here at once."

Captain Murray saluted again and vanished.

In about five minutes there was the sound of a measured tramp out-side.

The sentry outside the door challenged. Colonel Baden-Bowell got up and opened the door himself, and the two Boers slouched in, looking sullenly angry and very much disgusted, in the midst of a file of men with fixed bayonets.

"What is this for, General?" asked Cronje, in a surly tone, without waiting for his captor to speak.

"It's usual for gentlemen in your position, Mr. Cronje," said the General drily, "to wait until they are spoken to. You might remember that another time, please. However, I'll answer your question, for that's what I sent for you to tell you."

"But why are we suddenly put under arrest like this?" broke in Brantjes angrily. "Are you not making terms for our release? Why are we not on parole as gentlemen should be?"

"Because, to be perfectly frank with you gentlemen," said the General, with an unmistakable emphasis on the last word, "I don't think it would be advisable, to say the least of it. But I didn't send for you to argue with you on points of military etiquette. I have just had this letter from the President. Will you be good enough to read it, Mr. Cronje. You see His Honour proposes an armistice of a week in which to conclude the exchange.

"Personally, I see no need for it. Forty-eight hours would be ample, or even twenty-four. Your people are in possession of Fort Elebi. You can be escorted there and turned over to them, though I should expect you, as Commandant, to give me a pledge that neither you nor any of

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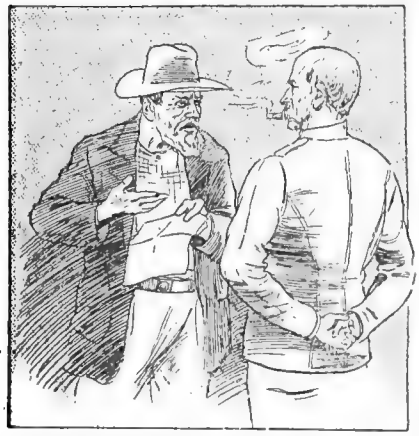
your men should bear arms against us until the exchange prisoners have been handed over to our people at Koomati.

"However, as His Honour proposes the week's armistice I will accept it, but with a reservation. I shall take the liberty of keeping you all under arrest until the week is up and I receive assurances that the President has performed his part of the contract."



"What is that for?" cried Cronje. "That is insult and tyranny."

The faces of the two Boers, which had been getting more cheerful while the General was speaking, suddenly flushed dusky red with anger and disappointment.

"What is that for?" cried Cronje, taking a half step forward towards the General, holding the President's letter in one hand and tapping it with the fingers of the other "That is insult and tyranny. Is not this enough? Has not the President promised to do what you ask him? If you accept the armistice, why do you not abide by it and observe it?"

"Do you remember, Mr. Cronje, how you observed the armistice at Potchefstroom a few years ago?" said the Colonel in a cold, dry tone, and looking him straight in the eyes. "You kept innocent women and children starving, then, for eight days longer than the laws of war and the commands of your superior officer gave you any right to do.

"We are not going to starve you, but I'll tell you this for your own information and guidance. If a shot is fired against this place before the week is up, I'll hang you in sight of the whole camp, and if there is the slightest sign of revolt or treachery among your people, I'll march every tenth man out to the trenches and shoot him. Now, during the week you will take up your quarters in the location with your men. Tell them what I have said, and for your own sake and theirs see that there isn't any trouble. Attention, the guard—march!"

Both the Boers made as though they would have uttered some angry retort or remonstrance, but the guard instantly closed round them, and the order to march was so peremptory and the bayonets gleamed so unpleasantly near, that they thought better of it, and walked out scowling sullenly, and muttering to each other in Dutch.

During the rest of the day the General, acting on a principle which is the golden rule of warfare with such enemies as the Boers—to suspect everything and take nothing for granted—called his staff together, and took every precaution that he would have taken if he had been certain that the camp would have been attacked that night.

Sentries were ordered to be doubled at sundown, vedettes were sent out on all sides, a powerful field search-light in a crow's-nest on a mast in the centre of the camp was got ready for instant use, and the Maxims planted in four other crows'-nests at the angles of the main laager were cleaned ready for action.

Strong outposts were thrown out to keep the northern road open towards Tati, whence the Imperial troops were now daily expected, and shortly after dusk the Matabele Legion disappeared from the camp in twos and threes, and Major Bryan, after a conversation with Miss Madge Morrison on a subject which it would be bad taste to make public, left to take command of them.

CHAPTER XXX.

A Battle in the Dawn.

The first half of the night passed absolutely without incident, but a few minutes after midnight, Major Bryan passed through the southern entrance to the camp, leading his horse, which showed every symptom of having been ridden very hard for some considerable distance. He went straight to the General's headquarters and asked to see him.

Like every other man in camp that night, General Carrington was, as it were, sleeping on his arms, and so he no sooner learnt who his visitor was, then he received him.

"So you are back sooner than you thought, Bryan?" he said, as he returned his salute by stretching out his hand. "Well, did you find our friends nearer than you expected?"

"I found them a bit to the south of Limonie, and within fifteen miles of the camp," was the answer. "From all accounts I should say there were about five thousand of them. They have about half-a-dozen Maxims, two Gatling guns, and two field-guns, which look like 15-centimetre Krupps. They are coming along very cautiously, and are evidently shy of the kopjes at night. It's possible they may wait till daybreak to come through. I see that the batteries have been withdrawn, but they are still in the hills; from that I venture to presume that you have no objection to them coming through."

"Not a bit, most excellent of scouts," said the General with a hearty laugh. "So you found that out, did you? and what did you do with your men?"

"I left them lying very low in the hills, half of them on each side of the road. When I saw that the batteries were withdrawn, I thought they might be useful there, after our friends had accepted the invitation to come through. We shall have a runner in every half hour to report progress.

"Quite right, quite right," said the General, patting him in a fatherly sort of way on the shoulder. "Now, go and get something to eat and drink, and have a couple of hours' sleep, or more if you can. We must be ready for them by four o'clock, and we shall have a pretty busy day in front of us."

It was evidently the intention of the Boers that it should be a very busy day. Their column now numbered nearly 6,000 men, that is to say, about twice the force under General Carrington's command including the twelve hundred men who now formed the Matabele Legion. They had brought their artillery and ammunition up by train almost as far as Limonie, a little village about eight miles south of the camp, and strong bodies of scouts had preceded the train, thrown well out on either side of the line.

They had fully expected to find the kopjes about Limonie held in considerable strength, but when they found them apparently deserted, Jan Van Beers, or Groot Jan as he was familiarly called, who was in command, put this down to the bad generalship of the *rooibaatjes* and to the supposition that the English were only just strong enough to hold the town itself. Captain Eloff, who had joined the column with two hundred and fifty of his best men from Krugersdorp, strongly dissented from this opinion.

"Don't go into the hills until daytime, Commandant," he said, when he heard the order to advance given. "Carrington is no fool. If he has left the hills open it is for a purpose, but you won't know it until you get in."

"*Ja!* and *he'll* know it, too, when we do get in," said Groot Jan with a laugh. "He doesn't know we are coming at all. These *rooibaatjes* are always asleep till the

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shooting wakes them up. No, no, yonker, forward and get the guns into position. We shall be at the town by daylight."

Captain Eloff could only shrug his shoulders and do as he was told, and Groot Jan led his column warily through the valley and planted his Gatlings on either side of the north entrance to cover his retreat should the town be too strong for him, or to play with effect on the English troops, if he could persuade them to leave their entrenchments and fight him in the open.

It must be remembered, too, that he was trusting considerably to the hope that by the time the fight began Cronje and his men would have managed to possess themselves of arms and create a diversion in the centre of the enemy's camp.

While the guns were getting into position he sent out a couple of columns of a thousand men each to line the hills about the road, while he himself led the main body of three thousand men, with the two Krupps and the Maxims, preceded by strong scouting parties on either side.

Somewhat to their surprise, and in total ignorance of the fact that their every movement was being watched by the keen eyes of Major Bryan's dusky scouts, and that news of all his doings was being carried on swift and silent feet to the camp, they advanced without let or hindrance to within a couple of miles of the entrenchments, and here Grout Jan thought it prudent to halt and wait for daylight.

They were now within shell-range of the town, but not a light was to be seen, nor was there the slightest sign of any life about the place. The scouting parties crept up closer and closer, till they were within rifle-shot of the forts and earthworks. It really looked as though they had caught the English utterly unaware, and could take the town at a rush.

Many of the younger Boers were eager to have a try for this, but a wholesale remembrance of what had befallen the Northern Commando prevented their officers from allowing it.

Shortly after four the dawn began to lighten the eastern sky, and then to his delight Groot Jan dimly saw a column of horse file out of the southern entrance to the camp into which the railway ran, and head southwards towards his main body, as though they had not the remotest suspicion of the presence of an enemy. They were dressed as troopers and mounted police, and they came on just as though they were merely bound on an ordinary expedition to the hills

The Boers allowed them to come within about six hundred yards, and then opened fire.

to see that all was safe. Presently another column issued from the eastern entrance as though going towards Fort Elebi. The Boers allowed them to come within about six hundred yards of their scouting parties, and then they opened fire.

The pale flames and puffs of smoke rose apparently all round them. Scores of saddles were emptied, and then, to the utter amazement and dismay of the Boers, there arose from the rest loud yells and hoarse shouts that most unmistakably came from Dutch throats, and, instead of using their rifles, which they could hardly do, seeing that they were unloaded, the survivors threw up their arms and rode, still yelling at the tops of their voices, back towards the trenches.

The next moment Commandant Groot Jan and his men got a lesson in new tactics that they never forgot till the day of their death. A ray of dazzling white light flashed down from a point high above the centre of the camp. It swept slowly round in a semi-circle, and whenever it fell upon man or horse, converging torrents of bullets from half-a-dozen machine-guns burst upon the spot and swept every living thing before them. Round and round it went, ever accompanied by the roar of the guns and the spattering hail of bullets. Hundreds of shots were fired at it before the blinded and disgusted Boers learnt that of all possible marks a searchlight is the most nearly impossible to hit.

The roobaatjes were among them cutting and thrusting.

At last it fell on the field-pieces and the artillerists who were training them on the town. Almost at the same instant a dozen streams of flame leapt out from different parts of the entrenchments, and a score of great rockets soared up into the air from the hills on either side of the Boers.

The seven and twelve pound mélinite shells began bursting round the guns, the rockets blazed out into globes of blue fire, and every Boer took to his heels and ran for cover at his best speed, for the story of what had happened among the kopjes on the Pioneer Road was known to everyone of them by this time, and they had no desire to experience the effects of dynamite dropping on their heads from the clouds. But the dynamite descended all the same, and they saw the rocks smash up round them and heard them come whistling in fragments about their ears, frightening them more than hurting them, it is true, but still producing a very good moral effect.

Then they heard the hissing and puffing of steam behind them, and presently, to their horror, they saw a train draw out from the camp and run with ever-increasing speed towards where their two deserted guns were lying. Seemingly these infernal English were going to do all their fighting by machinery this time, for the train was armoured from end to end, and bristling with the muzzles of guns pointing in all directions.

Still, they could not leave their only two pieces of cannon to be taken into the camp and turned against them without a struggle, and Groot Jan himself, at the head of a thousand mounted men, galloped down to the guns to hold them till they could be dragged away. At the same time the Maxims were turned on to the advancing train, and met it with a storm of bullets which was speedily replied to in kind.

Meanwhile another strong body of Boers had ridden out from the cover to the eastward, with the evident intention of pulling up the rails behind it and cutting off its retreat. At the same time there came the clatter of hoofs from within the camp, and a couple of troops of Lancers and

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Hussars rode out at a sharp trot and wheeled round to the left.

The searchlight flashed out again and streamed full into the eyes of the dazzled Boers. Then, with a thunder of hoofs and the rattle and clash of steel and a deep shout of fierce joy the *rooibatjes* were among them, cutting and

He led them in gallant style to storm the trenches.

thrusting and slashing with all the fury that betokened a long unpaid debt of vengeance. Then the searchlight vanished, and before the bewildered Boers knew what was happening, the Lancers and Hussars had got clear and reformed. Again the light flashed out and again they thundered in, and the revengeful steel did its bloody work.

The Boers could not have seen to shoot, even if they had had time, so they could only defend themselves with their clubbed rifles against the slashing sabres and the fast-thrusting lanceheads.

The light disappeared once more, but they did not wait for a third charge. Cold steel was not in their line at all and never had been, and those few minutes had taught them that, man to man, and horse to horse, the long despised *rooibaatje*, was as good as they were, and possibly a trifle better.

So when the light blazed out for a third time they broke and scattered and galloped back to their cover, followed by a sweeping hail of bullets from the Maxim in the nearest crow's nest.

Down the line a desperate and bloody struggle was going on for the possession of the two guns, but the desperation and bloodshed were nearly all on the side of the Boers. They had never fought an iron-clad train before and they did not quite know what to make of it. Their horses, too, plunged and shied in ungovernable fright every time they approached it, for the inventive genius of Major Bryan had suggested the happy idea of fitting syrens to the whistles, and every now and then these let out the most heart-shaking and blood-curdling screeches that ever woke the echoes of the African kopjes.

Storms of bullets were rained upon the train, but it had been prepared for just this kind of fighting. It was plated with boiler-iron from end to end, and the vital parts of the engines were similarly protected, and it's iron horses drew it to and fro unconcernedly through the storm while the Maxims, Gatlings, and Maxim-Nordenfeldts, which were mounted behind shields on its six trucks rained death on every man and beast that was out of cover. The carriages of the two guns were soon smashed to splinters by the shell fire from the earthworks, and the guns themselves lay useless on the ground.

Do what he could, Groot Jan could not get his men to face the fire from the train. They had not come to fight steam engines, they said, and so they rode off to the cover of the hills to think things over. But here they met with a new enemy no less terrible of its kind than the one they had fled from.

This was composed of Major Bryan's rocket corps, and the Matabele Legion which had been quietly concentrating on the other side of the kopjes to the south. So the fiery serpents poured into the air about them or came hissing into their midst as they were retreating and the dynamite charges pounded the rocks to pieces, and rent the trees and shrubs to splinters on every side of them. Then the rocket fire stopped, and the Matabele Legion formed and charged. The men had been given bayonets and taught to use them as they had used their stabbing assegais. The Boers took what cover they could, and met them with a close volley which did considerable execution, but before they could fire again, the rush of the Matabele was upon them and the steel had begun to do its work.

While this was happening to the south, Captain Eloff, seeing how badly matters were going, had got about eight hundred men including his own, together, and, taking them round to the north of the town, he dismounted them under cover. Then, putting himself at their head, he led them, in gallant style to storm the trenches. Twice he took them with splendid courage, right up to the earthworks, and twice they were swept back by the fearful fire that was poured upon them. While he was rallying them for yet a third attack, they heard a rattle of steel to their right and the sharp command in English: "Trot, gallop, charge!" and the next moment two troops of Hussars were riding over and through them and using their sabres in such terrible fashion that scarcely two hundred and fifty unwounded men got back to their cover.

Groot Jan was now beginning to see that, unless the fight was to go utterly against him, a desperate and decisive effort must be made, so he drew off his men, or those of them that were still able to move leaving some fifteen hundred dead and dying on the field, and made for the kopjes to the south-east, under cover of his Maxims and the three Gatlings; but even here a new surprise awaited him, for as he gained summit of the first kopje, from which he could overlook the whole camp, he stopped suddenly and pointing gway to the northward, cried:

"*Allemachtij!* There are more of them—*rooibaatjes* and those *verdomde* sailormen! I think we have got into a bad place."

CHAPTER XXXI.

Victory and Bad News.

The approach of the men of the Leicestershire Regiment and the Naval Brigade with their train of field artillery and machine guns from the North caused, as may be well believed, as much satisfaction to General Carrington as it had caused disquiet to Groot Jan and his disgusted subordinates.

In the half light of the early morning everything had been in favour of the camp and its defenders, but now it was broad daylight, and the marksmanship of the Boers, ensconced as they would be among the stones of the kopjes, would soon put bayonet and cavalry charges out of the question. More than this; they might possibly be able, unless speedily dislodged, to take up strong positions, defended by their Maxims and Gatlings, and hold them until artillery was brought up to shell the camp. Hence, as it would thus be necessary for the General to take the offensive at once, the addition to his fighting force was doubly welcome.

A guard of honour, composed of Lancers, Hussars, and Cape Mounted Rifles, was at once sent out to receive them and bring them in, and at the same time the armoured train was filled with men and sent down the line to co-operate with the batteries to the south, and keep the road open. The Matabele Legion, with a detachment of troopers, was sent off to join the guard at the Lotsani Drift, storm Fort Elebi and blow it up; after which they were to work south-westward round the hills, and occupy the road between Limonie and Shoshong.

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Hostilities were suspended while the reinforcements were entering the camp, but about half-an-hour later the Boers saw a very strange thing happen.

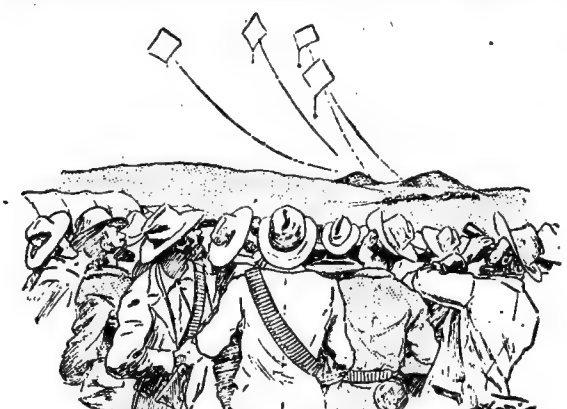
There was a fresh breeze blowing from the north-east, and they had taken up their position among the hills about the road to the south-west. Presently the English began to fly kites from behind the earthworks, and several great square things rose into the air and came towards them with packages of something hanging where the tails should have been.

The Boers watched them with uneasy apprehension, and presently they began to fire at them, of course, without the slightest effect, and at length the nearest of them stopped right over their heads.

They saw it give a little jerk and then jump up. The same instant the package parted from it and fell amongst them. Those who escaped saw a blinding flash, heard a sharp, stunning roar, and felt the ground shake beneath their feet. The rocks split asunder, and flew far and wide from the focus of the explosion, and the air was poisoned with a choking, deadly gas. Then came another shock and another, and then a storm of shot and shell from the entrenchment and the crows'-nests, and where each shell burst, the deadly fumes of the exploding mélinite followed the shell-splinters and fragments of rock, and killed where they had spared.

Those of the Boers who kept their heads tried to reply with their Maxims and Gatlings, but the moment these showed their positions seven and twelve-pounder shells began bursting about them, and then came the last act of the brief and bloody drama. While the shells from over a score of guns were still raining on the kopjes, the Boers saw three columns of foot file rapidly out of the eastern, southern, and western gates of the camp. They saw the newly-risen sun flashing upon hundreds of bayonets, and as the columns swung out and came on at the double for the kopjes, they flung themselves down and began to shoot for all they were worth, and many a brave fellow bit the dust before the open space was passed.

The Bluejackets reached the cover first. Then with a rousing cheer they went up the slopes like cats, and in a few moments more the Boers saw the deadly bayonets flashing among the stones and trees. Then suddenly the shell-fire stopped, and bullet and cold steel began to do



The English began to fly kites from behind the earthworks.

their work. It was shoot and stab, stab and shoot for about five wild minutes as the three columns—the Bluejackets, the Leicestershire men, and the Cape Rifles—fought their way up in a series of rushes which left the Boers but little time either to load or take aim.

The moment the bayonets had got within striking distance the fight was virtually over. The Boers had none, and could not have used them if they had had them; but they speedily learnt what terrible weapons they are in British hands.

For a while they fought with stubborn heroism, with their backs to the rocks, loading and firing till they were shot down or stabbed; but in the end they lost heart, and

The moment the bayonets got within striking distance the fight was virtually over.

flung away their rifles and ran. It was Amajuba over again, but the other way about.

The triumphant British chased them over the hills and down the southern slopes, and there they found the armoured train and the battery waiting for them. As they fled down in disorderly masses into the open with the lines of pitiless steel behind them, the guns on the train opened on them, and from behind the train troop after troop of cavalry—the Hussars, Lancers, Mounted Police, and troops of the old Buluwayo Field Force—which had come through by the road, swung out at a quick trot and streamed across the road, cutting off all hope of retreat to their base in the south.

Captain Eloff and a few others of the bolder spirits, including Groot Jan himself, seeing that all was lost, put themselves at the head of those of their men who were still able to ride and fight, and made one desperate charge for freedom. But they had first to ride through a withering storm of death from the train, and when this stopped and the British Horse came charging in amongst them scarcely half of them were left for the sabres and lanceheads to do their work upon.

Groot Jan and the three other principal Boer leaders were flung wounded to the earth and taken prisoners, but once more Captain Eloff, almost by a miracle, and aided no doubt by his own strength and courage, fought his way through with about a score of his men, and four days later reached Nijlstroom with the tidings of disaster.

The other survivors surrendered unconditionally, seeing that there was nothing else to do. All but the leaders were deprived of their arms, given three days' provisions from their own stores and told to be off across the border. General Carrington did not carry out his threat to hang Commandant Cronje, as he considered he was sufficiently punished by being forced, as he had been, to ride out from the camp at the head of the disguised prisoners in order to draw the first fire of the attacking force, but having recaptured him, he kept him close prisoner with the other leaders and took him into Shoshong, which surrendered without firing a shot, in a very different state to that in which he had hoped to return to it.

(To be continued.)

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "The Lost Provinces," by Louis T acey, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. S. Chorlton, 227 Spa Road, Bolton, Lancashire. Attempts for this week's prize may deal with ANY SUBJECT and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, May 14th. Post-cards only, please.

A Large Appetite and a Small Lunch.

A SHORT time ago one of Her Majesty's inspectors, paying his quarterly visit to Broadmoor, asked the chief warder if there were any complaints.

"There is a rumour," he said, "that the prisoners are underfed here, so I wish to interrogate the prisoners on the question, as the authorities are anxious to know the truth."

On entering the cell of the first prisoner he noticed that the atmosphere was close and stuffy, and inquired of the prisoner why the ventilator was closed.

"Well, your honour," replied the prisoner, "the last time I had it opened a wasp flew in and carried off my blooming lunch while my back was turned."

S. C.

Bother the Coal Bounty.

A FRIEND of mine whose garden is close alongside the main line at a busy junction where the down trains are stopped to allow the up trains to pass as it is a single line, thought of a good plan to replenish his coal cellar.

He rigged up a very good effigy of President Kruger and stood it up in the garden in full view of the drivers and firemen of the trains.

The supply of coal he got surpassed all his expectations, and it says much for the firing of our drivers and firemen, that although he has only tried the experiment six days he has had to put up six fresh Krugers.

One fireman on being remonstrated with by his driver, replied:

"Bother the coal bounty, let's down with old Kruger!"

C. S.

Newspapers Never Err.

ONE day a gentleman called at the office of a certain newspaper, and said to the editor: "Sir, it is announced in your paper that I am dead."

"Well," replied the editor, "if it is in our paper, it is correct."

"It is not correct, for here I am alive," rejoined the other.

"Well, it cannot be helped," said the editor.

"But I expect you to contradict it," said the injured man.

"No, I cannot do that," said the editor, "as we never contradict anything that appears in our paper. I will do the only thing I can do. To-morrow I will put you in the list of births."

A. K.

With a Proviso.

A CERTAIN magistrate who is blessed with a tremendous head of hair, which is generally in a state of wild disorder, was questioning a youthful witness to make sure that he comprehended the character and importance of the oath he was about to take.

"Boy," he said, with his severest and most magisterial manner, "do you feel sure that you could identify me after six months? Now, be careful. Think before you speak."

"Well, your worship," replied the boy, after a prolonged survey of the magistrate's portly figure and rugged features, "I ain't sure, but I think I could if you wasn't to comb your hair."

T. R.

Proof Positive.

CROSS-EXAMINATION in the witness-box is a pretty severe ordeal for most people, but some men do not mind it.

"Are you sure that occurrence was on the seventeenth of the month?" asked the lawyer, in a tone which seemed to imply that certainty upon such a point was almost beyond the reach of the human intellect.

"Yes," said the undismayed witness, "it was the seventeenth."

"Now remember," continued the lawyer, with increasing solemnity, "remember you are under oath. How do you know it was on the seventeenth?"

"Because the day before——"

"Be careful what you say now. Go on."

"Because the day before was the sixteenth, and the day after was the eighteenth."

W. K.

Rough on Father.

RECENTLY a gentleman was out for an afternoon's walk, when he came across a friend, an inspector in the police-force, who took him to view some of the cells at the police station.

On returning home the fond father was trying to explain to his little five-year-old the sights he had witnessed during the afternoon.

A few days after he took the little fellow for a ride on a tram-car. As they proceeded on the journey the boy espied a policeman, and at once exclaimed aloud:

"Is that the policeman who took you to the station the other day?"

The gentleman alighted from the tram-car at once with every eye turned towards him.

S. L. W.

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But Yet an Orphan.

It is only the professional beggar who has passed through a severe course of training, who remembers his part on all occasions. A lady was guilty of setting a very effective trap for a little boy, who one day came up to her in the street, whining.

"Please, mum, a 'alfpenny, mum. So 'ungry, mum. Ain't 'ad nothink to eat since yesterday mornin', mum. Do, mum. I'm a poor horfun, mum."

"Poor boy! An orphan?"

"Yes, mum."

"Dear me! where do your father and mother live?"

"In Queen Street, mum."

E. M.

Where Was O'Flynn?

An Irish magistrate has a habit of allowing his voice to drop so low that his words can with difficulty be heard. The story is told that he was sentencing a prisoner not long ago when a man in the court-room shouted:

"Speak louder, your honour! Speak up!"

"Turn that man out of the court!" said the judge.

The order was obeyed and the proceedings went on.

"Call the next case," said the judge, when he had finished with the prisoner in whose case the interruption had occurred.

"Terence O'Flynn!" called the clerk; but Mr. O'Flynn did not appear.

It was discovered that Prisoner O'Flynn had disappeared, and his absence could not be accounted for until someone said:

"May it please your worship, Terence O'Flynn was the man you just sent out for shouting to your worship to speak up." T. A. S.

Worse and Worse.

A famous musician was once asked by two vocalists to decide which of them sang the better. The day being appointed, both parties exerted themselves to the utmost, and when they had finished, the musician, addressing the first, said:

"As for you, sir, you are the worst singer I have ever heard in my life!"

"Ah! ah!" said the other exulting, "I knew I should win the wager."

"Stop, sir," said the doctor, "I have a word to say. As for you, sir, you cannot sing at all."

K. F.

Settling a Doubt.

There is a venerable and benevolent judge in Paris who, at the moment of passing sentence on a prisoner, consults his colleagues on each side of him as to the proper penalty to be inflicted.

"What ought we to give this rascal, brother?" he says, bending over to the right.

"I should say three years."

"What is your opinion, brother?" turning to the left.

"I should give him about four years."

The Judge (with benevolence): "Prisoner, not desiring to give you a long and severe term of imprisonment, as I should have done if left to myself, I have consulted my learned brothers and shall take their advice. Seven years!"

H. R.

Told Them So.

One of the boys brought home his arithmetic lesson, and his mother, after watching his struggles for a time in silence, offered to help him.

"Oh, no," said he, with a look of scorn, "you can't do it, that's certain."

As the mother was a clever woman she naturally felt somewhat nettled at this, and insisted on her ability to solve the problem.

She did so to her own satisfaction, but not to the boy's.

He declared that she did not do it right, though he could not tell what was wrong.

"We'll leave it to father," said she finally.

The father had been to the University and had taken high honours in mathematics.

He said that the mother's method was the right one, and indeed the only one.

Unconvinced, the boy went off to school the next morning. At noon he came home triumphant.

"There, I told you so!" he shouted, as he entered the house. "You did it wrong!"

"What was the matter?" both parents asked.

"Well, you left out two 'sinces' and a 'hence,'" was the youngster's convincing reply. E. T. S.

Where Are Ye?

First Highlander: "Whether would you pe killed wi' a sma' pullet or a pig shell, Tonal?"

Donald: "Wi' a wee pullet, to be sure."

First Highlander: "An' foo that, Tonal?"

Donald: "Weel ye see, if ye get struck wi' a wee bullet, there ye are, but if ye get struck wi' a big shell, where are ye?" G. W.

Paddy Again.

An Irish labourer was told by his foreman to bring a couple of wheelbarrows from a workshop about two miles distant.

Paddy went for them, but finding that he could not manage to bring the two at once, brought back one.

The foreman, seeing him come with only one of them, asked him why he did not bring the two by putting one upside down upon the other.

"Och, sure, sor, I didn't think of that!"

So off went Padddy to bring the other. After half an hour had passed he returned, puffing and blowing, with two barrows.

"I don't want three barrows, my man."

"Sure, sor, I did not bring three barrows."

"What did you do with the first one that you brought?"

"Begorra, I took it back to bring the other."

B. C.

We Want a Bright Cover Top-Line!

A cheque for a guinea will be sent to the person who forwards, on the back of a post-card, what we consider to be the brightest and best top-line for the cover of *Short Stories* that should, in some way or other, embody reference to the merits of *Short Stories*—that is, of course, if you consider any exist—and should be as crisp as possible.

All attempts should arrive at this office not later than the first post on May 14th., and marked "Top Line."

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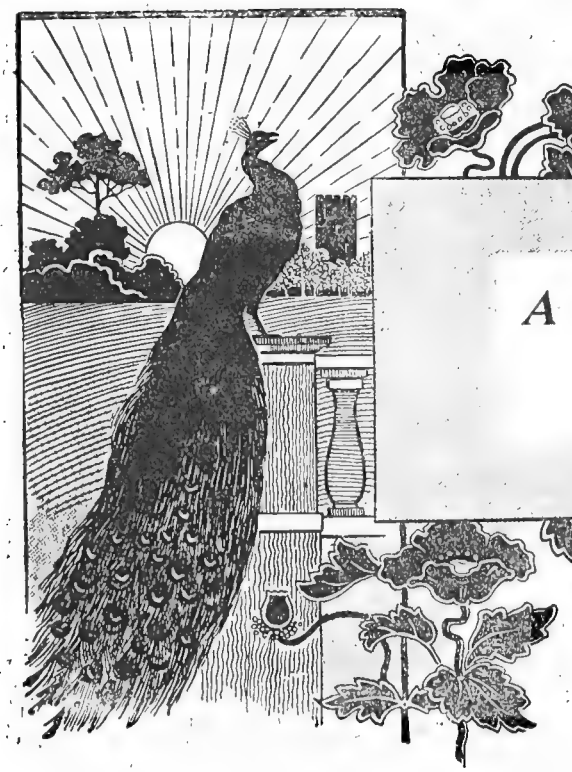

A Secret Service Mission.

GENERAL POLTRIKOFF leant back in his easy chair, and swinging smartly round on its pivot, confronted his secretary, Major Shelmotin, who was reading extracts from a document to his chief.

Shelmotin paused in his reading, for he knew that when the chief turned round the axis of the easy chair he meant to speak to him.

"This is too bad, Shelmotin," growled the general; "too bad of Knutoff. He is three months at Coonst; feeds us with comfortable weekly reports, each one more hopeful than the last, and now he calmly confesses he cannot obtain it. Nonsense! He is an idiot! Every man has his price."

"It is provoking, your Excellency," answered Shelmotin.

"I expected it would be difficult; but it certainly is not impossible. I know Coonst very well. Knutoff ought to have succeeded, and he is certainly wrong to give up. He is too young for a diplomatist."

"What are we to do now, Shelmotin?" asked the chief, whose heart was bent on the Star of the First Class of Saint Nichevo.

The major was his right hand; his memory, his encyclopædia, his amanuensis, his factotum, without whom he was thoroughly lost and incapable of managing his department—the Secret Service section.

"Send another officer to Coonst" suggested Shelmotin.

He knew his chief, and had aspirations of his own. He saw before him the Second Class of Saint Nichevo, and a lieutenant-colonelship.

"But whom shall I send? Tell me?" urged the general.

Shelmotin rose from his chair, and said, "Send me, your Excellency."

"Send you?" gasped his chief. "What am I to do without you, when we two can scarcely get through the work? You alone know all my ways. No, Shelmotin, I cannot send you."

"Well, your Excellency, it is only a suggestion," replied the major calmly. "You know we must have it. The reputation of the department is at stake. I have named the only man who, I believe, can get what we want."

"But what am I to do without you?" asked his chief, but in a different tone.

"Your Excellency overrates my services altogether, and can do very well without me for a month or two," answered the major. "Captain Pokoff can take my place whilst I am away. What matters a little accumulation of arrears, if we get it?"

The general mused for a while, and then said: "Very well, Shelmotin, so be it. You can go. Are you sure you can get it?"

"Quite sure, your Excellency."

Two days later the major took the train for Coonst, the capital of the neighbouring State, and having arrived at his destination, engaged a suite of apartments, as became his wealth and position, in an hotel not far from the War Office. The ostensible object of his visit to Coonst was to consult Dr. Comte about his eyes.

* * * * *

The major dined every day at the *table d'hôte*, which was patronised by several of the higher non-military officials of the War Office, with whom he soon became acquainted. They knew his position. He had called in full uniform at the War Office, and they were charmed with his pleasant manners. Their staff officers did not treat them like equals as he did.

The state of his eyes did not permit the major to go much abroad, and especially not after dark.

"Comte forbids me stringently to expose myself to the night air. I am a prisoner within my four walls. I wish you would take pity upon me, and come and see me," he said.

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They did take pity on him, and came and saw him. They came more frequently and stayed later. They played cards. The major was such a charming host. The best champagne and capital cigars were set before them.

A couple of weeks passed by. Every night there was card-playing in the major's apartments. Not for extravagant stakes. The Privy Secretaries, Privy Registrars, etc., are not liberally salaried. The major played quietly and studied his visitors evening after evening. When they left him, he opened his windows and sat down to think. He weighed the men in his mind, and at last came to a conclusion.

"Pritzelwitz is the fellow for me," soliloquised he. "He is a born gambler. How he clutches the money! how his eyes sparkle, his hands tremble! And he is in the Fortification Department! The little beggar is always hard up. I'll try him."

The next day was a Sunday. The sun shone brightly and the major looked out of his window when he spied Pritzelwitz stepping jauntily along the street, with the air of one who enjoys a holiday. The major coughed; Pritzelwitz looked up and lifted his hat.

"Come up, like a good fellow."

They chatted and smoked, drank a glass or two of wine, and at last Shelmotin proposed a game at *écarté*.

"It is a sin to play when the sun shines," said he apologetically; "but I dare not go out."

Little Pritzelwitz did not object to play. He preferred gambling to the sunshine in the park. He won largely—that is, for him.

After half an hour the major rose, yawning, and said, "I have no luck. Let us go to luncheon. You must come and give me my revenge to-night. I declare I must have dropped two hundred marks."

Pritzelwitz was delighted, and promised to give the major his revenge that night.

They began playing again in the evening. They played till late at night. At first, luck favoured little Pritzelwitz, but in the end it forsook him. He lost all his money.

"Never mind, give me your I O U," urged the major. "Better luck next time."

When Pritzelwitz left, excited with wine, but pale and unwilling to go, he left his I O U for eight hundred marks behind him. The major had promised to give him his revenge the next night.

The next night came, and again they played. The major denied himself to the others in order to be undisturbed with his guest. Not that he cheated. Only he kept cool and collected, and his visitor was excited to the last degree. That night the major's winnings were nearly doubled, and all in I O U's. They were to play again the next evening. Poor little Pritzelwitz was in a dreadful state of mind. The hours seemed to be days. Evening would not come. At last he found himself opposite the major again. After he had lost two or three games, the major, whose deal it was, said:

"By-the-bye, I must go back to Reimsbery the day after to-morrow. Dr. Comte has discharged me as cured. You must try and win to-night, for I am afraid I cannot give you your revenge to-morrow. I am engaged to dine with our ambassador."

Poor little Pritzelwitz! His eyes seemed to start out of his head. He drank off a tumbler of champagne and rose from the table. He stalked about the room, wringing his hands and muttering to himself. The major watched him calmly, cards in hand. At last

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Pritzelwitz sat down again, and the major dealt. But his opponent seemed quite unnerved.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the major.

"I can never pay you what I have lost," gasped the poor little man, covering his face with his hands.

The major rose from the table and laid the cards aside.

"Debts of cards are debts of honour," said he slowly, and emphasising the *honour*. "I expect these I O U's to be paid before I leave, or I shall be obliged to inform Colonel von P. that you pocket your winnings, but are unable to pay your losses."

"For heaven's sake, major, do not ruin me!" entreated the unhappy victim. "The slightest rumour will cause my instant dismissal."

"I regret it very much, but I must follow the dictates of honour," replied the major stiffly. "Persons without means, should not play for money."

"I'll blow my brains out! Poor Paulina!"

The major shrugged his shoulders.

"I'll pay you off in instalments," entreated poor Pritzelwitz. "I'll insure my life, you shall not lose a penny; I promise it."

"I expect you to redeem those I O U's before I leave," said the major.

"Then I may as well make away with myself at once," said Pritzelwitz, in despair. "My life is ruined; why prolong it?" He took up his hat and opened the door.

"Wait a moment," said the major.

Pritzelwitz shut the door, and remained standing hat in hand.

"I'll make you a proposal," said Major Shelmotin. "You say you are a ruined man if I inform against you. Very well, I will return you your I O U's and give you a thousand marks besides, if you bring me to-morrow, before eleven in the forenoon, the plans and details of the new fortification of Petritz."

Pritzelwitz was speechless.

"Do what you like," continued the major. "The plans interest me very much; they are worth to me the price I offer. If you bring them you are free. Now, good-night."

He bowed him politely out of the room.

Pritzelwitz was quite confused; he did not know what to do, but he was sorely tempted. He could have got the plans easily enough, but his conscience smote him. He walked round and round the square near the hotel, till somebody tapped him on the shoulder, with the question.

"Wool-gathering, Kurt?"

It was his colleague and future brother-in-law—Paulina's brother, Fritz Dimpler.

"Oh, Fritz! Oh, Fritz! I am a lost man. Save me!"

"Don't be an ass, Kurt. Fire away! What is the matter? Tell us, old fellow," said Fritz. When he had heard the story, he gave a low whistle. "You are an idiot, Kurt. You don't deserve help; but for my sister's sake, and on your word of honour that you will never touch a card again, I will help you. Come along!"

They went to Fritz's chambers, and an hour afterwards Kurt left buoyantly, and with firm step.

The next morning, at eleven a.m. precisely, Pritzelwitz called on the major. He shut the door cautiously, and produced a carefully folded packet which the major opened and examined. It contained a number of plans, of sections, distances, and sketches, bearing the superscription, "Royal Fortress of Petritz." The major nodded his head, satisfied, and gave Pritzelwitz his I O U's and the promised sum.

Before the major left next day, he received an official acknowledgment from the treasurer of the "Invalid Warriors' Fund," thanking him for his generous donation.

"Little ass," muttered the major, as he stepped into the cab. "Judas repented himself of the blood-money."

* * * * *

General Poltrikoff was in high glee. A telegram had informed him, two days ago, that Major Shelmotin's cure was perfect, and now the major himself had returned and brought the long-coveted plans. They were spread out on the general's table. Presently General Espinoff, the Director of Fortifications, came in.

"So, you have got them at last?" said he eagerly.

General Poltrikoff pointed to his table. Espinoff sat down and examined the plans. He shook his head, and hummed and hah'd.

"I know those plans," said he, at last. "A most remarkable coincidence. Yet it cannot be. Just wait one moment."

He went away, and came back with the plans of his own pet creation—the new fortification of Key Castle. He placed them side by side with the others, and they agreed in the most minute details.

"You have been done, Shelmotin," said he. "I suspected it as soon as I saw your plans. The topographical details of Petritz would not admit of such a system of outlying forts as in these plans. You have brought back a copy of my own fortress. You need not have gone to Covnst for it."

"Saint Nichevo!" muttered General Poltrikoff aghast.

Major Shelmotin bit his lips and remained silent, but General Espinoff went away laughing, for Knutoff, was his nephew, and he enjoyed Shelmotin's discomfiture.

General Poltrikoff could not get on with Shelmotin after that. He had become used to Popkoff, and obtained a distant command in the Kalmuckian Steppes for his former factotum.

K. Wilson.

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Millions of money leave this country every year for poultry and eggs that could easily be produced here at enormous profit. TO AMATEURS ONLY. To encourage this industry we will Give Away 500 of our 20th Century Incubators Free of Charge, trusting that the profitable results obtained on a small scale will induce our clients to purchase our 100-Egg Incubators, and make a good living from poultry breeding. Address MANAGER, Room N, POULTRY BREEDERS' APPLIANCE COMPANY, 3 Clarence Road, Southend-on-Sea.

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Send me an envelope (stamped and addressed) and I will tell you how to remove all superfluous hair **free of charge.** (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Miss E. V. (Room 3), 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

A SUM of from 12s. to 25s. per week can be earned in spare hours or evenings by either sex everywhere.—Send addressed envelope for particulars to Box 24, Eclipse Works, 89 Aldersgate Street, E.C.

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I was for years; by chance I came across a simple home remedy that reduced me from 17st. to 10st. 12lbs., and I will willingly send particulars **free** to any sufferer enclosing stamp. Mrs. L. E. FELL, 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

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Men who are weak and suffering from nervous exhaustion, loss of vigour, Varicocele, &c., can be successfully and permanently cured without operation or detention from business by THE DR. COLLINS most improved and rational method medical science has ever yet produced.

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Refuse Substitutes and demand "KAPUTINE," the Safe Remedy. There is no substitute "LIKE IT"; nothing "AS GOOD"; nothing "SIMILAR."

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Mr. Skidmore's Family Pet.

THE other morning, while Mr. Cole, the proprietor of the circus and menagerie of that name, was standing at the door of his show, a tall, sunburnt, bald-headed man approached and said:

"Be you the wild animal man, m'ster?"

The proprietor of the "Double Mammoth Mastodon Aggregation," admitted that such was the fact.

"Then," proceeded the other party, "I think I'll get you to make me an offer for a large-sized healthy lion I've got."

"Good specimen, eh?" asked the circus man.

"Good? Well, I should say so. Measures eleven feet from the tip of his nose to the tip of his tail. Caught him myself when he was a cub. Just four years old to-morrow."

"Hum—good appetite?"

"Appetite? Well, when he ate my wife's sister it didn't seem to disagree with him. My wife took on dreadful, and wanted me to shoot the poor thing. But I told her that he probably suffered a good deal as it was, and, that as most likely he'd catch rheumatism and things from her, we'd better call it square."

"And did she?"

"Well, she got reconciled after a while, especially as Johnny seemed fond of playing with the children. One morning, soon after that, my wife's mother—whole family lived with me, you see—didn't come down to breakfast. As all her false hair was hanging over the chair, and Johnny crawled out from under the bed, we saw at once that the heavy hand of affliction was upon us again."

"Looked that way didn't it?"

"Well, as you may suppose, the old lady—that's my wife—took on a good deal, and sent for some prussic acid right away. But just then arrived a gold medal from the S.P.C.A., awarded on account of my forbearance in the Aunt Maria business, and so I got her calmed down after a while."

"Pacified her, eh?"

"Yes, I managed to arrange a reprieve for Johnny, You see, I was awfully fond of pets, and tender-hearted, and all that, you understand. I argued that the poor animal didn't know he was doing wrong. That smoothed things over for another month."

"What happened then?"

"One day I sent Tommy, our youngest boy, for some sugar, and he took Johnny along for company. Now, whether it was because Johnny was fond of sugar or not I don't know, but he came home alone; and as soon as we noticed a peculiar kind of bulge on his ribs, about as big as Tommy, we concluded that the dread archer had marked another Skidmore—my name is Skidmore—for his own.

"The whole family took on like mad, and Mrs. S. was about to put a powder-keg under Johnny and touch it off herself, when I pointed out that it wouldn't do to desecrate our offspring's tomb in that way."

"After that you kept the animal chained?"

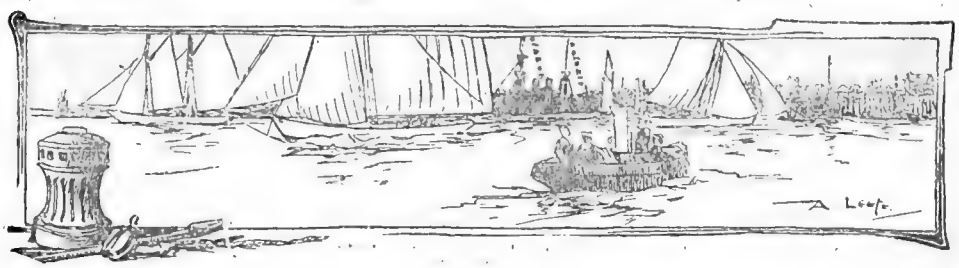
"Well, no," said Mr. Skidmore, with a deep sigh. "The fact is, I set out to get a chain several times, but one thing and another prevented, until one day last week I actually missed the old lady herself. I looked about for her for a couple of days, when somehow of a sudden it struck me where she was," and the bereaved husband again sighed heavily.

"Don't wonder you want to sell the beast," remarked the menagerie man, after a pause.

"Well, I do, and I don't," said Mr. Skidmore, abstractedly. "There's so many memories and things clustering round Johnny that it seems like parting with one's whole family, as it were. On the other hand, though, now that the old lady is gone, I feel as if the insect had—well, had outlived his usefulness, so to speak."

"All right," said Mr. Cole, "bring him round after the performance."

"There's a mint of money in him as a family pet," said the other, earnestly, as he shook hands with the circus proprietor, and turned on his heel. W. G. H.



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TO OBTAIN A SPOTLESS COMPLEXION.

MANY people have a strong prejudice against the use of Powder upon the face—and not without good cause, for the majority of toilet powders are absolutely harmful to the complexion. Even when made of the finest materials the ingredients are such that they clog the pores, and eventually give the skin a dry, withered appearance. LILLIE POWDER is a carefully prepared MEDICATED toilet powder, containing not only delicate antiseptic qualities, but also a series of SKIN TONICS and FOODS. It is therefore absolutely beneficial to the complexion, and its constant use will strengthen and nourish the supersensitive nerves of the skin, thus restoring and preserving the bloom and freshness so typical of English beauty.

Prepared and delicately perfumed under the strict personal supervision of Mr. W. CLARKSON (Her Majesty's Perruquier).

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"I hereby certify that I have examined the LILLIE POWDER and find that it is absolutely pure. It is a most important toilet preparation, as it renders the SKIN AND COMPLEXION BEAUTIFULLY SOFT. Many Powders are so drastic in their action on the skin that there is the greatest *danger in using them.* The Lillie Powder is entirely free from injurious substances; and it is not only harmless, but produces a beneficial action on the skin. It possesses COOLING, SOOTHING, and BEAUTIFYING properties. I can conscientiously recommend the Lillie Powder as a first-class preparation."

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Member of the Chemical Societies of Paris and St. Petersburg.
Diplomé de l'Institut de France (l'Académie des Sciences).
Analytical Chemist to H.R.H. Princess Alexandra von Hohenlohe, etc., etc.

MRS. LANGTRY says: "THE LILLIE POWDER is prepared from **my original recipe.** I have used it for many years, and recommend it as being **most beneficial to the complexion.**"

ORDER A TRIAL BOX AT YOUR CHEMIST.

PRICE ONE SHILLING. BY POST, 1s. 2d.

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(S.S. DEPT.) THE LILLIE SYNDICATE, 3 HENRIETTA ST., LONDON, W.C.

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THE BRAIN GYMNASIUM

In these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the competitor whose attempt we receive giving the correct solutions of all the puzzles. If more than one is absolutely correct the prize of £2 will be given to the first correct attempt dealt with.

If no lists of absolutely correct solutions are sent in the first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes.

Each week we shall award in addition to the above, either ten of our silver plated pencil-cases or ten popular six shilling novels to be distributed amongst the competitors whose attempts are absolutely correct and have failed to win the first prize, or, if no complete lists of correct solutions are received, to those whose attempts show the fewest mistakes.

Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, Short Stories, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by first post on Monday, May 21st, 1900.

No. 112.

When a quarrel is aided with a piece of wood, what bird expresses the result?

No. 113.

Form a square word with the equivalents of the following:

"A METAL," "TEMPER," "A MONSTER," "WANT."

No. 114.

What does this describe?

JOIN ME AT AND
I
S

No. 115.

My whole looks very short, but in reality I am very long; in fact, neither my beginning nor my end has ever been settled. I influence individuals, I influence nations. I am even able to work wonders. Yet two pronouns will give you all that is necessary to form me.

No. 116.

Complete the fourth phrase, dealing with the letters in the same order:

1. NOTABLE MAN.
2. NOT ABLE MAN.
3. NO TABLE MAN.
4. NOT A

No. 117.

Form the name of a British seaport by using the centrals of the following:

A SERPENT.
A MARINE PLANT.
CENSURE.
A UNIT.
A CEMENT.
TO ENDANGER.
CRAZED.

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 88 to 93.

The prize of £2 has been awarded this week to William Robertson, of 7A North Woodside Road, Glasgow, whose solution was the first correct one dealt with.

Each of the following has been awarded a copy of "The Knight of the King's Guard," by Ewan Martin:

Miss H. Warner, Park House, Ifield, Crawley, Sussex.
Stuart B. Findlay, 5 College Street, Leicester.
C. D. Frazer, 53 Gordon Road, Southend-on-Sea.
Miss E. Kellehar, 57 Bannockburn Road, Plumstead.
George Humphreys, 19 Colville Street, Nottingham.
H. Goldsmith, 56 Campbell Road, Southsea.
J. P. Gross, 19 Rue des Belles Feuilles, Paris, France.
Mrs. Henry Fay, 55 Moyne Road, Dublin.
James M. Wood, Heath Vale, Hatherley Road, Sidcup.
John Robertson, 1 Balgray Place, Dundee.

SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES.

Nos. 94 to 99.

No. 94. The Indian Ocean. North America. Constantinople.

No. 95. A little darkie (dark e) in bed with nothing over him.

No. 96. Un-IT-ed. Un-TI-ed.

No. 97. PIGTAIL.

No. 98. 113 1-8ft.

No. 99.

HEAT
EACH
ACRE
THEM

TOWARDS PRETORIA.

By JULIAN RALPH.

A Story of the War to the Capture of Bloemfontein.

EXTRA CROWN 8vo,
BOUND IN REAL KHAKI.

Price 6s.

"Brisk and graphic."—*Scotsman.*

"Cannot fail to be popular."—*Echo.*

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JEWELS IN VELVET CASES.

In a case lined with silk or velvet, there is where the lady who has diamonds is apt to keep them. Not because they are likely to suffer from exposure. Oh, no, a diamond can stand anything in the line of weather, and any amount of rough usage. But it is small and costly; easy to lose and hard to find; and much desired by those gentlemen who, like Mr. Wemmick, are fond of portable property.

In the body, which is the most delicate and beautiful of velvet cases, nature keeps those jewels, the vital organs. Unlike diamonds these precious things do not well endure exposure and careless treatment. Especially are they injured by cold. Therefore, so far as possible, they are surrounded by warm flesh and protected from chance shocks or blows from without. Fortunately for their owner no thief covets them, as, once taken from the case, they have no value.

What we may call the Koh-i-noor among these living gems is the *liver*. It occupies the warmest and cosiest nook of the body, well sheltered from cold. Yet it is not thereby made secure from evil. Its gravest dangers come from the other jewels in the case, and from the owner who has power over them all. Now let us see what these facts have to do with the cases of Mr. Robert Lee and others—you and me, perhaps, among them.

"In November, 1895," writes Mr. Lee, "I began to get weak and low. My appetite was poor and the little food I ate gave me a deal of pain about the chest. I was unable to sleep well at night, and in the morning felt exhausted and tired."

Mr. Lee's statement that he was "tired" after lying on his bed all night is physiologically correct. Fatigue is loss of strength whether from labour or any other cause. You will note, however, that while fatigue arising from healthy exertion is overcome by food and sleep, this kind cannot be overcome save by curing the disease which produces it.

"My feet," continues Mr. Lee, "were swollen and painful, and a *tendency to gout* manifested itself. I felt low-spirited and thought I was breaking up. Presently I became so weak I could scarcely move about. Month after month I remained in this condition. Having heard so much about the efficacy of Mother Seigel's Syrup in complaints of this kind, I began using it, and soon found benefit. I could eat well, and food agreed with me. I continued to take it, and improved from week to week. It was not long before *the gouty symptoms entirely disappeared*, and I was in my usual good health. Should you desire to publish this letter you may feel free to do so."——Robert Lee, Postmaster, Tealby, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, Feb. 22nd, 1898.

Whether Mr. Lee is or not subject to gout, and has, therefore, had experience of it, he does not tell us. In any case he will please take notice that the immediate cause of gout is what is technically called reversion of the liver, allowing the formation in the blood of uric acid, a poison which, settling in the joints, creates the inflammation and the pain; while the partial inaction of the kidneys causes the bloating. He and others who have suffered in the same way will be wise to look sharply after those "gouty symptoms." For gout is not an ailment all by itself; it is a member of a very dangerous combination, which may include affections of the heart, skin, nerves, brain, bladder, and kidneys.

The whole trouble begins, as so many troubles do, in the stomach. Digestion, to a greater or less degree, fails; fermentation of food in the digestive organs follows; the bowels become costive; the rotting substances remain in the stomach and intestines; the blood is filled with impurities; the over-worked liver refuses its duty; the change from food to body-tissue is not completed; the deadly uric aid is formed in dangerous quantities, and several diseases, of which gout is one, are set going. To correct this state of things is always difficult and often impossible.

The proper treatment is, by the aid of Mother Seigel's Syrup, to purge the blood, and indeed the whole system, of the fearful corruption engendered within it, and to tone the stomach, liver, skin, bowels and kidneys to act powerfully and naturally. The Syrup may be relied on to do this even when other remedies have sadly fallen short. And for us all the lesson is this:—Cure indigestion in its early stages by taking the Syrup when the first signs of it appear.

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GIGANTIC SPRING SALE, 1900.

ILLUSTRATED BARGAIN CATALOGUES OF CARPETS, HEARTHRUGS, TABLE LINEN, CURTAINS, etc., POST FREE, if mentioning *Short Stories*, 12/5/1900, when writing.

A Stock of 10,000 PATENT WADDED QUILTS, TORALIUMS, OR BED COVERS (as Illustration).

Covered with Oriental Reversible Soft Sateen with double border. Size 54in. by 60in. These Quilts are offered below anything in the Wholesale Trade, and cause the greatest consternation to the buyer, wondering how they can be produced for the money.

SPECIAL OFFER: Three Quilts for 10/-, or Six for 19/6, or Twelve for 38/-

Sale Price **3/6** Each. *Post Free 6d. ex.*

At an Enormous Reduction to Clear Out.

Belmont, Pavilion Parade, Brighton, 4/1/99 — Mrs. FORGE writes: "The three Wadded Quilts Messrs. F. Hodgson & Son sent me are very warm and light. I am very pleased with them. Please dispatch 3 more. Cheque inclosed, 10/-.

The "Queen's Royal" Household Carpets and Hearthrugs are extolled by all the Nations of the Earth.

Gigantic Sale of the "QUEEN'S ROYAL" Household

Sale Price.

2/- HEARTHRUGS Regd.

In REVERSIBLE RICH TURKEY PATTERNS, measuring 6ft. long, and 3ft. wide. These HEARTHRUGS have gained a world-wide reputation for MAGNIFICENCE, CHEAPNESS, and UTILITY, having no equal. Registered New Designs, and considered Works of Art. Thousands of Repeat Orders and Testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. **SPECIAL OFFER.—Three for 5/9; Six for 11/3; Twelve for 22/-**

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Admittedly the Cheapest in the World. *Woven without seam. Altogether superior quality, with handsome border to correspond. A marvel for excellence and beauty. Thousands of Repeat Orders and Testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.*

6 ft. by 9 ft.	... ...	7/6	10½ ft. by 12 ft.	... ...	18/-
8 ft. by 9 ft.	... ...	9/-	13 ft. by 12 ft.	... ...	21/-
6 ft. by 12 ft.	... ...	10/6	9 ft. by 15 ft.	... ...	19/6
9 ft. by 9 ft.	... ...	11/-	12 ft. by 13½ ft.	... ...	22/-
9 ft. by 10½ ft.	... ...	13/6	12 ft. by 15 ft.	... ...	25/6
9 ft. by 12 ft.	... ...	15/-	12 ft. by 18 ft.	... ...	30/-
9 ft. by 13½ ft.	... ...	16/6	12 ft. by 21 ft.	... ...	35/6

REDUCED SALE PRICE.

Octagon Villa, The Lizard, R.S.O., 15/8/98.—J. CARWARDINE, Esq., writes: "I am very pleased with the Carpet you sent me. I have saved £9 per cent. by giving you the order. I paid half as much again to a local tradesman for Carpets the same quality a year ago. I have never been so pleased of any former purchase."

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The Right Honourable The VISCOUNTESS MELVILLE writes: "I am very pleased with the 'Royal' Velvet Hearthrugs to hand, and would like four more Hearthrugs. Her ladyship would also like two Velvet Carpets at 39/-, one ditto at 60/6 to match them. Cheque £8 14s. inclosed."

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9 ft. by 9 ft.	... 28/-		12 ft. by 16 ft.	...	69/-
9 ft. by 10½ ft.	... 33/-		12 ft. by 18 ft.	...	77/-

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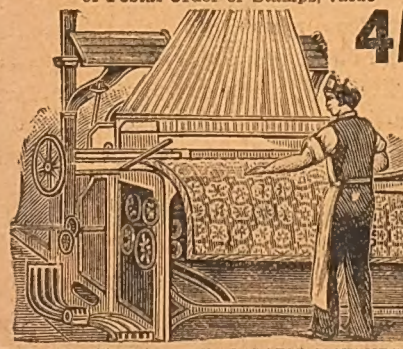
To Readers of "Short Stories," 12/5/1900, on receipt of Postal Order or Stamps, value 4/6



(Regd.) We will send you THE LARGEST GENUINE REVERSIBLE CARPET in BRUSSELS PATTERN WITH RUG ever sold at the price, direct from the Looms to any address on receipt of amount. Suitable for drawing-room, dining-room, bedroom, etc., bordered and woven in Brussels patterns, as an advertisement for our goods, thus saving any middle profit. Remember these are woven, and are made of a material almost equal to wool. Thousands of these Carpets have been already sold at double these prices.

SPECIAL OFFER—2 CARPETS and 2 RUGS, 8s. [Cut this out.]

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TURKEY PATTERN CARPETS (Regd.)

Reversible, woven throughout, bordered, richly blended in several colours to suit any furniture. These goods cannot be distinguished from real Brussels when laid down, and can not be excelled in durability.

Size.	Each.		Size.	Each.
6ft. by 6ft.	2/11	REDUCED SALE PRICE.	10½ft. by 12ft.	11/6
6ft. by 7½ft.	3/11		9ft. by 15ft.	12/6
6ft. by 9ft.	4/9		12ft. by 12ft.	12/9
7½ft. by 9ft.	5/11		12ft. by 13½ft.	14/6
9ft. by 9ft.	7/6		12ft. by 15ft.	15/9
9ft. by 10½ft.	8/6		12ft. by 18ft.	19/6
9ft. by 12ft.	9/6		12ft. by 21ft.	22/6

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A Reversible "Prudential" Hearthrug (Regd.), to match above Carpets, sent for 1/6 extra, size 2yd. long and 1yd. wide. Special Offer, Three Hearthrugs for 4/3, or Six for 8/-, or Twelve for 15/6, sterling value.

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THE LOT 10/6

Postage 9d. extra

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